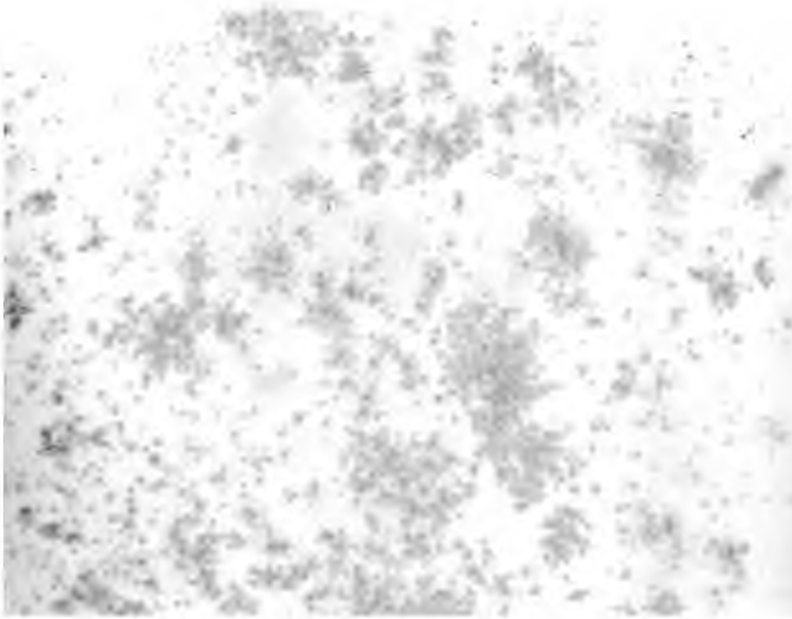
THE

RICHES OF CHAUCER.



THE

.ICHES OF CHAUCER:

IN WHICH

HIS IMPURITIES HAVE BEEN EXPUNGED;
HIS SPELLING MODERNISED; HIS RHYTHM ACCENTUATED;
AND HIS OBSOLETE TERMS EXPLAINED:

ALSO HAVE BEEN ADDED

A FEW EXPLANATORY NOTES

AND A

New Memoir of the Poet.

BY

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE,

AUTHOR OF
'TALES IN PROSE FROM CHAUCER,' 'SHAKESPEARE-CHARACTERS,'
'MOLIÈRE-CHARACTERS,' &c.

SECOND EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED.

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PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

In the days of his destitution and misery, Judge Jefferies complained that it had been his fortune to offend all parties;—his master, James II., because he had failed to allay the voracity of the royal avenger; and the people, because in undertaking the office of an even-handed judge he had "cut mercy with a sharp knife to the bone." Like Jefferies, I fear that I am placed in the same predicament with my readers. Some will condemn me for having done too little; others for being a ruthless mutilator. The black-letter men, and sticklers for not altering or removing the old land-marks, will sentence me without benefit of clergy: the modern reader, to whom anything in the form of antique diction or orthography acts as a repellent, will inquire what service I have rendered towards reviving a taste for the poetry of Chaucer, seeing that I have retained all his obsolete terms and idioms, with several antiquated orthographies? I request an audience in my behalf.

First, to the charge of "mutilation." I plead not guilty; unless under such charge be conveyed the lopping away from the goodly tree unsightly branches and shoots of exuberant growth. Yet, as in such operation many fair blossoms must necessarily fall with large pruning; so I candidly acknowledge, that,

in the course of my excision, I have cast behind me, with the rampant vegetation, some few bright blossoms, and consummate fruits of "vegetable gold;" the sacrifice of which, at the time, caused me many a sigh.

My first proposal to my Publisher was, to edit a *complete* edition of Chaucer's Poetical Works (excepting only his impurities), with the orthography modernised, the obsolete terms, idioms, and technicalities explained at the foot of each page, and the rhythmical accentuations denoted where requisite. After mature consideration, my coadjutor rejected the plan upon the ground that many of the poet's writings had, both in subject as well as diction, become uninteresting to the modern general reader—and such only after all was to be consulted. My next proposal was, to collect THE RICHES OF CHAUCER. This he accepted at once, limiting me, however, to six hundred pages. Rather than frustrate my own intentions by too great a pertinacity, I yielded to his stipulation; resolving, however, that the measure should be "well filled, pressed down, shaken together, and running over into the bosom" of the reader; and an inspection of the pages will manifest my zeal and success in the cause of my revered poet. Having attentively weighed over every line of his numerous, and in many instances extended poems, in preparing the edition according to my original plan; noting the accentuations, elucidating the obsolete words and phrases, subjoining occasional explanatory notes: when the second proposal was entertained and resolved upon, I cheerfully proceeded to go through the whole again for the purpose of selection. The reader, therefore, will exonerate me from the charge of lukewarmness in the task I have undertaken; and I hope, in the result, from that of incapacity and slovenliness as to my manner of accomplishing it. If I have erred in rejecting too

large a proportion, I plead not merely the straitened prescription of my publisher; but I shelter myself under the authority of no less a poet than Thomas Campbell, who in one of his lectures, when treating of the astonishing genius of Chaucer, expressed himself to the following effect:—"If, in searching for his beauties, Chaucer rewards our patience, he also tries it:"—an opinion to which I would fain not subscribe, though I cannot but feel its truth.

To the charge of modernising the poet's spelling, I can reply without difficulty. In the first place, for some centuries there was no orthography fixed; so little so indeed, that I believe I am correct in stating that even Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his own name three several ways. But Chaucer gave himself considerable licence with regard to orthography: he not merely altered the composition of words at the terminations of his lines that they might rhyme to the eye as well as to the ear; but he would even, upon occasion, give a different termination to them to make them rhyme to the ear in the first instance. An example of this, among others, occurs in the *Clerk's Tale*, line 1039, where the personal pronoun *me* is altered into *mo*, that it may rhyme with *also*. Every edition of Chaucer varies not only with its predecessor in the spelling of certain words, but even with itself in the spelling of the same word. I therefore claim the privilege of preceding editors: besides which, my object was, to make the language of my author as facile and attractive to the eye, as to the understanding.

The idea of accenting the lines of Chaucer did not originate with myself; it is a suggestion put forth by Mr. Godwin * in his noble history of the poet and his times,—for it was a piece of modesty to call the work

* Life of Chaucer, 8vo. vol. i. p. 398.

"A Life of Chaucer,"—the life of the poet threads the volumes like a silver stream through a rich champaign.

The reader, it is assumed, need not be informed, that our poet was the first after the Norman conquest who in his compositions restored, or at least mainly contributed to restore our native language. Nevertheless his diction abounds with Gallicisms, as well as with positive French words; and where these occur with an *e* mute, they must be pronounced, or rather breathed in with the line, as the modern French repeat, and more especially sing, their little lyric compositions. Without such a process it would be impossible to read the greater part of his verses; and the ignorance of this requisition has probably obtained for him the charge (and from men who ought to have known better—Dryden for instance) of being a rugged writer of verses. With but few exceptions, no poet perhaps is more smooth and musical; and instances of the latter quality, if space allowed (for it must be remembered that I am circumscribed in my dimensions of letter-press) could be multiplied to a remarkable extent. Those words therefore which were adopted immediately from the French, must (to read his verses fluently) retain their primitive, and not corrupted accentuation. The following short list I have subjoined to illustrate the above remark. *Liquór; courége*; *reasón; viége*, for vóyage; *visége; usége; mannére*; *labóur*; *preláte*; *languége*; *marriége*; *virtúe; natúre; áventure*, for advénture; *honóur*, &c. It is not improbable that Dryden may have instanced the twelve first lines of the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales" as a specimen of the so-charged "ruggedness" in the prosody of the Poet.

In the course of the present volume, some words will be explained in the glossary at the foot of each page, which many of my readers will doubtless think

a gratuitous trouble on my part. Upon these occasions I have considered the mere novice. The glossarial interpretations too, being placed within immediate reference, are preferable to their being collected in a separate volume, or at the end of the work, as is the case in other editions of the poet. In my own individual instance, I have noticed that the first aroma of a lovely passage has fled while poring over a closely printed dictionary in a separate volume, to learn the meaning of an insulated word.

In a few instances, also, words and phrases occur in the original text which modern refinement would discountenance. These, rather than omit the whole passage, I have softened, or paraphrased, taking care however to denote the circumstance by means of the inverted comma. I should conjecture, that the necessity for taking this liberty with my author has not occurred a dozen times during the whole course of my labour.

In the advertisement to the present selection from the works of Chaucer, I proposed to omit all those tales and casual passages of ill-favoured complexion, which, if retained, would infallibly banish the book from the very circles whither it was directed, and whence I hope to hear of its welcoming—I mean those ornaments of this civilised age, and patterns to the civilised world, the ingenuous, intelligent, well-informed, and artless young women of England. I would fain hope that in the general fermentation of mind now going on here, that amidst all the voyages that are making in search of the *useful* in life—all the circumnavigations for the substantial, that the really ornamental (for that is "useful," seeing that it conduces to a refined and gentle civility, and consequently to happiness) will not be wholly lost sight of in the race. Let not our poetry be quite forgotten, and above all, our *old* poetry : let not the eloquent

simplicity—the only well-wearing eloquence after all—(like simple mechanism) the sudden, and electrical pathos of old Chaucer; the universal code of humanity of Shakespeare; the gentle fancy, languishing voluptuousness, and religiously poetical faith of Spenser; the divine afflation and Atlantic roll of Milton;—let not the works of all these giants become the subjects of mouth-honour only; let them not be trolled over the tongue, and after bolted; but let them be healthily prepared, ruminated, and thoroughly digested;—when their ethereal fumes will ascend into the brain, and prompt the mouth to "speak great things." Lord Bolingbroke, when discoursing of Political Reform, says, that there should be a constant recurrence to first principles. To preserve the structure of our language, and to prevent its becoming either as a flat whited wall, or a fantastic gew-gaw with unsightly and unmeaning excrescences, the eye should be ever reverted (not for the purpose of servile imitation, but for guidance) to those standards of classical composition that have stood the test of the severest criticism—that of both heart and head combined. Certain it is, that the purest and most eloquent writers of the present day have all been steeped to the lips in the literature of the Elizabethan age.

Do you then, my young friends (for to you principally do I, of course, address myself) let the loadstars of your literary voyage be the standard writers of the old time.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE zealous, and very welcome exertions of the Chaucer Society to revive the text of the glorious old Bard in its original integrity; and the consequent access that has been given to their endeavours by the frequent contributions to our literary periodicals; with the additional encouragement of a delightful, and as able an essay, that appeared in the *Churchman's Shilling Magazine*, by the Rev. H. D. Atkinson, entitled, *Stray Thoughts about Chaucer*; and a cordial note by Leigh Hunt, in the preface to his *Stories in Verse*, were all sufficient inducement to reproduce the long-wanted, and frequently asked-for, RICHES OF CHAUCER. The proposal was in consequence made to its present Publisher, who welcomed the recommendation; and the result has been, that the product of a youthful enthusiasm and thorough "labour of love" has reappeared in the present carefully-revised edition to an earnest, and it is hoped, useful existence.

Upon again going over my task of revision, for the purpose of correction, I have become more and more confirmed in the opinion, that from the peculiar quality of his mind—that of noticing the smallest casualties and bye-plays of character—Chaucer would have been a consummate dramatic writer had he come into existence *two hundred and fifty years* later: he might

then have wrestled for the championship; though, of course, he would have been "thrown" by the Stratford Yeoman. Throughout his compositions we have renewed evidences that he possessed all the qualifications requisite to occupy and give lustre to this department in imaginative writing. For instance, his recognising the most minute peculiarities in character and manner—mental and personal; his felicitous fancy and imagination; his potent, and natural eloquence; his abounding humour; and—as with all the highest humorists—combining with it an intense feeling of the pathetic; for the highest spring-tides ebb out the farthest.

Fletcher, with (it is said) Shakespeare, dramatised the same tale that Chaucer has told from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio (The Knight's, of *Palamon and Arcite*); and very finely they have executed their task: but they have not a more lovely picture in their play than that of Emily in the garden, gathering flowers, herself "as fair as is the lily on its stalké green;" and "as an angel heavenliche she sang in the clear air of morrowning." Nor have they any dramatic eloquence more home-striking than the dying speech of Arcite to the same Emily: it is in character a companion with the elegy of Sir Ector de Maris over the corpse of his brother, Sir Launcelot.*

Again, how finely he would have dramatised the *Troilus and Creseida*—particularly as regards the heroine. It would have formed a contrast to Shakespeare's—I would rather *not* say—*too* faithful portrait of that light-hearted wanton; whereas Chaucer has extenuated—at all events, commiserated her defection. The passionate exclamations and musings of Troilus are all perfectly dramatic in character. The same may be said of most of his other tales; and his moral

* See vol. iii. p. 346 of the admirable edition of *The History of King Arthur*, by Mr. Thomas Wright.

portraits, from the *Romaunt of the Rose*, may (for their fidelity of personation) be denominated literary photographs.

All these characteristic qualities and excellences in our great poetic genius I commend to the earnest study and cultivation of my sisterhood and brotherhood throughout the two hemispheres; for to the younger of these I principally and naturally dedicate these incorruptible RICHES, wishing that they may return to them as valuable a harvest of joyous thoughts as have rewarded the contented labour of their

Brother and Friend,

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA:
September, 1870.

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Troilus and Creseida and Miscellaneous Poems.

LIFE

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

CONSIDERABLE PAINS have been bestowed by the biographers of Chaucer in ascertaining the station that his family held in society. One—Leland, says, that he was of noble stock; another—Pitts, that he was the son of a knight; Speght says, that his father was a vintner; and Hearne that he was a merchant. Mr. Godwin, too, inclines to the last opinion. The question therefore is a doubtful one; though, for the following reasons, we may rationally infer that he was of gentle birth. First, he was bred at both universities; he had travelled through several of the countries of Europe, and was a student in the Temple. Secondly, the circumstance of his being appointed to the office of serving as one of the king's pages, warrants the conclusion that would be drawn of the respectability of his family; seeing that in those days, birth was minutely required to qualify a person for the station of page to the king. Thirdly, his connexion by marriage with the family of John of Gaunt, the great Duke of Lancaster; the match being not merely sanctioned but recommended by that proud nobleman, considerably strengthens the argument. Yet, after all the discussions that have been expended upon this not very important point, worthy men of his own time, and men of all subsequent ages who have inquired into his life and writings, unite in the opinion that he possessed an

extraordinary talent, and a noble and incorruptible nature: these qualities form the true aristocracy of humanity, and they are the only ones indeed worthy of a moment's consideration. His genius, his sensibility, and his refinement, (allowing for the age in which he lived,) his generous deportment while in adversity and exile; his independence of principle and steadiness of attachment,—all exhibit the true gentleman, whatever may have been his father's worldly occupation.

The sirname of our poet is evidently of French origin, the old Norman word *Chaucier* or *Chaussier*, signifying a shoemaker. The word too, as applied to the article of dress, must have been commonly used during his life; for in the translation of the Gospel of Mark by Richard of Hampole, the hermit, who died in 1394, the following verse, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose," is thus rendered :— "A stalworther man than I schal come eftar me, of whome I am not worthi downfallande, or knelande, to louse the thwonge of his CHAWCERS." An ancestor, however, of the poet's, and probably the founder of his family in England, was a *Knight*, and came over with William the Conqueror, his name appearing in the roll of Battle Abbey. Several persons of the name of Chaucer appear in our public records—all of them possibly ancestors of the poet. In the Tower records a Le Chausir appears, who lived in the reign of King John; and in that of Henry III. an Elias Chaucesir, who received from the successor of that monarch, (Edward I.) the sum of ten shillings, disbursed from the treasury. The same king also is discovered attending to a legal question respecting a thousand pounds, instituted at the instance of a John Chaucer. The supposition of Speght, however, that the father of the poet was one Richard Chaucer, a vintner, who lived at the corner of Kirton-lane, in London, and dying in 1348, left his house and stock in trade to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, bears no show of probability; since, as the industrious author of the life prefixed to Bell's edition of Chaucer's works rationally argues :— "There is something very unnatural in this vintner's leaving all his estate to the church, while his son was at the university; and that

Chaucer should never complain of this, or, for anything that we can discover, feel the effects of it, since it is evident enough that in his youth he lived at a rate that could not have been supported without a fortune."

This father of English poetry was born in the second year of the reign of Edward III., 1328, and certainly in London, notwithstanding the contradictory accounts of his biographers; since he himself, who must be the surest authority upon this point, when speaking of the troubles which were occurring in that city, says—" The city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I was forth-grown;—and more kindly* love have I to that place than to any other in earth, (as every kindly creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindly ingendure)."

The earliest account we have of Chaucer is, that he was entered a student of the University of Cambridge, and as he himself says in "The Court of Love," at the age of eighteen : of which college, however, no record exists,—none, at least, has hitherto been discovered. But from the very accurate description he has given of the distinct locality of the place in his humourous tale of the Miller of Trompington, Clare Hall, or Scholar, or Solere Hall (for Speght pronounces them all to be one and the same), may have been the college of which he was entered. Here he wrote his poem of "The Court of Love;" a composition of extraordinary merit for a youth probably under twenty years of age. It is written in the form of a vision, (the mode in which he most usually imbibed poetic inspiration,) and bears frequent evidence that the writer had made himself acquainted with, and had come fresh from reading Ovid's "Art of Love," and the then popular poem of William de Lorris, "The Romaunt of the Rose." It is a little remarkable that the versification of Chaucer's two earliest poems of magnitude, should be as accurate, refined, and polished as even the latest of his compositions,—a convincing proof of his natural correctness and delicacy of ear. The easy and flowing style too, in which the Court of Love is written, will ever claim for it an interest with the critical admirer of a pure structure of language. As an early production, it presents, as may be anticipated, little attraction with regard to plot, variety of

* Kindly was formerly used in the modern sense of natural.

incident, or vigour of description: upon these points, indeed, it is positively defective; but it otherwise lays claim to eminent merits, and these will be found in an agreeably humourous delineation of manners and peculiarities of custom. In allusion however to this poem, as a work of high merit, it were an injustice to conceal one quality in it, which, when tested by the modern code of moral refinement, must subject it to unqualified censure. It is, that although the design and intention of the author has been to celebrate a just and honourable passion, he has nevertheless, at intervals, defaced his page with indelicate allusions that would be thought to taint any atmosphere beyond the precincts of a brothel. This feature in the compositions of the old writers of this, and indeed of subsequent periods even to a late date, while it serves to indicate the existing surface-stratum of morality, cannot but perplex the ethic philosopher, when he discovers that a real and profound homage to a true and virtuous affection reigned as triumphantly during the ages of chivalry as in any recorded period of the world. Is it, that in the ages referred to, *Words* passed for little, and *Actions* were richly estimated?—Certain it is, that in our own time, "words" (professions) bear a high premium in society; although we have no desire, for the sake of indulging in an antithesis, to insist upon the full converse of the proposition.

From Cambridge Chaucer went to Oxford, but to which college is again as much a matter of conjecture as the former place of his abode. A doubt has been raised by some of the biographers as to his having studied at both of our universities, and solely on the score of its "improbability,"—because it is contrary to the usage of the moderns to do so. Leland however, one of the earliest of his historians, plainly asserts that he went from Cambridge to Oxford; and the statement wears the appearance of truth, when we consider that his two earliest known literary associates were Gower and Strode, both members at that time of the University of Oxford. During his abode there it is conjectured that he translated the poem of Troilus and Cressida, dedicating it to the two eminent students just mentioned. But to return to the reason given for his not having left Cambridge for

the College of Oxford,—the "improbability" of the circumstance. It may be sufficient to state, that formerly it was not so unusual a proceeding with scholars. Bishop Grosseteste and Roger Bacon studied at both universities, and afterwards went to Paris for the same purpose. Michael Scott, too, the eminent mathematician, and William Occam, the scholiast, pursued the same course. Leland, in addition to the above statement, says, that the poet after quitting Oxford went over to Paris, at that time the most esteemed place of resort for the purpose of study in Europe. So fashionable indeed was the capital of France as a seat of learning during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, that at one time in the first named period, the number of students exceeded that of the inhabitants. In this "finishing school," the biographer quoted above says, that "he imbibed all the beauties, elegance, charms, wit, and grace of the French tongue to a degree that is scarcely credible;" and previously to this addition to his literary accomplishments, the same writer pronounces that, "at the period of his leaving Oxford, he was already an acute dialectitian, a persuasive orator, an elegant poet, a grave philosopher, an able mathematician, and an accomplished divine. These, no doubt, (he adds) are lofty appellations; but whoever shall examine his works with a curious eye, will admit that I have sufficient ground for my panegyric."

Being thus accomplished, our poet travelled into France, Holland, and the Low Countries; and upon his return home, entered himself of the Inner Temple, where he studied, (though probably with no ardour of devotion) the municipal laws of the land. During his residence here, he is reported to have been "fined five shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet-street." Speght gives the anecdote upon the unsatisfactory authority of a Mr. Buckley, who, he says, had seen the memorandum in the Temple records. Shortly after he had begun to turn his mind to this branch of learning, his lustrous talents made him known at the court of Edward III., a prince as eminent for his patronage of genius as for his romantic valour. In this gay region of chivalry, mirth, and gallantry, surrounded by wit and beauty—the nursery of poetic thought, he started upon the full career of life:

his age, the prime of manhood (under thirty), and person of just proportion, with a fair and beautiful complexion, full and red lips, and a graceful and dignified carriage; to crown which attractions may be added his newly-fledged renown as a love-poet,—all gave him the advantage over any competitors. A handsome and modest young poet moving about a gallant court, is a beautiful picture for the mind to contemplate.

Chaucer's first preferment was to that of king's page, at a yearly salary of twenty marks,—no mean stipend at that period. This act was followed by an appointment to the office of gentleman of the king's privy chamber, with an additional gratuity of twenty marks; and shortly after, we find him promoted to be shield-bearer to the king, a post of signal honour, since, by the fulfilment of its duties he was brought in immediate vicinage to the royal person, and upon occasions of victory was rewarded with military honours.

In this gay sphere he was patronised and courted by John of Gaunt, who manifested a more than ordinary esteem for him, and for whom, in celebration of certain events in the life of that nobleman, he wrote, "The Book of the Duchess," "The Complaint of the Black Knight," and "The Dream of Chaucer:" also by the lovely Lady Blanche, his Duchess, at whose request he wrote, "La Priere de Notre Dame," and other godly poems: by the womanly and heroic Queen Philippa, the mother of the Black Prince,—the shield of the distressed and the destitute, and of "them that had none to help them,"—the saviour of her husband's fame at Calais: by the Countess of Essex: also by that exquisite specimen of a woman and a wife, the beautiful Countess of Salisbury; whose well-known accident at the ball was exalted into an heraldic constellation: * and lastly, by the Lady Mary

* Having made mention of this celebrated woman, the reader will require no apology for being reminded of, or introduced to the following testimony in favour of the character bestowed upon her in the text. It carries with it a double interest: first, the charm of the narrative itself; and secondly, the circumstantial evidence as to the moral integrity of our poet's female admirers. The extract is from FROISSART, who, after relating the progress of Edward III. against the Scots that were besieging the countess in her husband's castle near Carlisle, thus continues:—"The same day that the Scots departed from the said castle, King Edward came thither

Countess of Pembroke, and daughter of the king, who appears to have justly appreciated his extraordinary

with all his host about noon, and came to the same place whereas the Scots had lodged, and was sore displeased that he found not the Scots there; for he came thither in such haste, that his horse and men were sore travailed. Then he commanded to lodge there that night, and said how he would go to see the castle, and the noble lady therein, for he had not seen her since she was married before: then every man took his lodging as he list. And as soon as the king was unarmed, he took a ten or twelve knights with him, and went to the castle to salute the Countess of Salisbury, and to see the manner of the assaults of the Scots, and the defence that was made against them. As soon as the lady knew of the king's coming, she set open the gates, and came out so richly beseen, that every man marvelled of her beauty, and could not cease to regard her nobleness with her great beauty, and the gracious words and countenance that she made. When she came to the king, she kneeled down to the earth, thanking him of his succours, and so led him into the castle, to make him cheer and honour, as she that could right well do it. Every man regarded her marvelously: the king himself could not withold his regarding of her; for he thought that he never saw before so noble and so fair a lady. He was stricken therewith to the heart with a sparkle of fine love, that endured long after: he thought no lady in the world so worthy to be beloved as she. Thus they entered into the castle, hand in hand: the lady led him first into the hall, and after into the chamber, nobly aparelled. The king so regarded the lady, that she was abashed: at last he went to a window to rest him, and so fell in a great study. The lady went to make cheer to the lords and knights that were there, and commanded to dress the hall for dinner. When she had all devised and commanded, then she came to the king with a merry cheer, who was in a great study; and she said, 'Dear sir, why do ye study so? for, your grace not displeased, it appertaineth not to you so to do: rather ye should make good cheer and be joyful, seeing ye have chased away your enemies, who durst not abide you: let other men study for the remnant.' Then the king said: 'Ah! dear lady, know for truth that since I entered into the castle, there is a study come to my mind, so that I cannot choose but to muse, nor can I tell what shall fall thereof;—put it out of my heart I cannot.' 'Sir,' quoth the lady, 'ye ought always to make good cheer, to comfort therewith your people: God hath aided you so in your business, and hath given you so great graces, that ye be the most douted and honoured prince in all christendom: and if the King of Scots have done you any despite or damage, ye may well amend it when it shall please you, as ye have done divers times ere this. Sir, leave your musing and come into the hall, if it please you; your dinner is ready.' 'Ah! fair lady,' quoth the king, 'other things lyeth at my heart that ye know not of; but surely the sweet behaving, the perfect wisdom, the good grace, nobleness, and excellent beauty that I see in you, hath so sore surprised my heart, that I cannot but love you; and without your love I am but dead.' Then the lady said: 'Ah! right noble prince, for God's sake mock nor tempt me not. I cannot believe that it is true that ye say, nor that so noble a prince as ye be would think to dishonour me and my lord, my husband, who is so valiant a knight, and hath done your grace so good service and as yet lieth

genius; for she is said to have frequently complimented him upon his poems, as well as to have excited him to familiar and intellectual intercourse, seeing that she would rally him upon his modest and silent habit.

Upon perusing the poem entitled, "Chaucer's Dream," the cause of the intimacy between John of Gaunt, afterwards Duke of Lancaster, and our poet will become sufficiently apparent: for this composition being an allegorical account of the courtship of that prince with the Lady Blanche, daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, the historian shows that he had been made a more than ordinary confidant of the prince's secrets. Tradition relates that the intercourse between the lovers was conducted with the most cautious privacy; but that after a long series of manœuvres and entreaties, with various obstacles surmounted, the parties obtained the consent of the king, also a dispensation from the pope, and were married at Reading in May, 1359; the event being celebrated with unusual pomp and solemnity.

in prison for your quarrel. Certainly, sir, ye should in this case have but a small praise, and nothing the better thereby. I had never as yet such a thought in my heart, nor, I trust in God, never shall have for no man living. If I had any such intention, your grace ought not all only to blame me, but also to punish my body —yea, and by true justice to be dismembered.' Therewith the lady departed from the king, and went into the hall to haste the dinner. Then she returned again to the king, and *brought some of his knights with her*, and said: 'Sir, if it pleaseth you to come into the hall, your knights abideth for you to wash: ye have been too long fasting.' Then the king went into the hall and washed, and sat among his lords, and the lady also. The king ate but little; he sat still musing, and, as he durst, he cast his eyes upon the lady. Of his sadness his knights had marvel, for he was not accustomed so to be. Some thought it was because the Scots had scaped from him. All that day the king tarried there, and wist not what to do. Sometime he imagined that honour and truth defended him to set his heart in such a case to dishonour such a lady, and so true a knight as her husband was, who had always well and truly served him. On the other part, love so constrained him, that the power thereof surmounted honour and truth. Thus the king debated in himself all that day, and all that night. In the morning he arose and dislodged all his host, and drew after the Scots, to chase them out of his realm. Then he took leave of the lady, saying: 'My dear lady, to God I commend you till I return again; requiring you to advise you otherwise than ye have said to me.' 'Noble prince,' quoth the lady, 'God, the father glorious, be your conduct, and put you out of all vilain thoughts. Sir, I am, and ever shall be ready to do your grace service, to *your honour and to mine*.' Therewith the king departed all abashed."—*Chronicles*, 4to. vol. i. p. 98.

With this contract originated the power of John of Gaunt; while the poet's fortunes at court also advanced through the influence of his patron and patroness; the latter, indeed, like a true woman, never lost sight of the zeal he had displayed in their cause; and, as will be immediately seen, she made a suitable and graceful acknowledgment of her sentiments towards him.

In the same year in which the marriage of the Duke of Lancaster was solemnized, Edward III. undertook one of his formidable invasions of the kingdom of France, and for the prosecution of his purpose he raised an army of 100,000 men, who in 1000 vessels were embarked at Sandwich. From an inference which will be stated immediately, it has been concluded that Chaucer accompanied this expedition,* the first and last occasion upon which he can be traced to have substantiated his right to the title of "armiger." The ground for drawing the conclusion alluded to is, that upon the occasion of his being called upon to give testimony, in the year 1386, in a cause of arms between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, our witness deposed that he had "borne arms twenty-seven years:" as therefore it was customary for persons undertaking the knightly profession to date the period of their "bearing arms" from the time of first engaging the enemies of their sovereign; and as no expedition had been undertaken for three years previously, or for ten years subsequently to the one in question (in 1359); added to which by comparing the dates, as the precise term of twenty-seven years deposed to by Chaucer will be found to coincide, the deduction may be fairly drawn, that to his other accomplishments our poet could lay claim to the attractive one in all ages of the world, whether civilised or barbarous,—that of being a warrior.

The Duchess Blanche retained in her service Catherine, the daughter of Sir Payne, or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and guien king at arms for that territory. This lady married Sir Hugh Swinford, Knight, at Lincoln, who dying shortly after their union, the duke and duchess renewed their protection, appointing her governess of their children. Lady Swinford, after the death of the

* Godwin.

Duchess Blanche, became the duke's mistress, and subsequently his third wife. She was a woman so eminent for beauty, that the circumstance was recorded upon her tomb in the cathedral of old St. Paul. Her sister, Philippa, had long been beloved by Chaucer; and Blanche, in return for the poet's services and friendship, advanced by her influence his interests with the object of his affections. By this union it was that Chaucer became allied to the royal family of England. This event is supposed to have taken place about the year 1369, the poet being more than forty years of age.

In the allegorical effusion alluded to above (Chaucer's Dream), and which indeed may be styled an epithalamium on the marriage of his benefactors, he has interwoven much tender allusion to his own mistress. For instance, when dwelling upon her lovely qualities, and wondering that heaven had fashioned such a being, he adds,—

> "And in so little space
> Made such a body, and such face;
> So great beauty, and such features,
> More than be in other creatures!"

and the poem concludes with a passionate "Envoy," pointedly addressed to Philippa. The entire manner in which Chaucer has contrived to shadow forth his own hopes,—the whole based upon the fleeting fabric of a "dream,"—is conceived in the finest perception of poetical taste and manly delicacy.

Although, by a comparison of dates, it should appear that the servitude of our poet in the court of love lasted nearly nine years, yet there is no ground for presuming that the delay was occasioned by cruelty, or even indifference on the part of the lady; but on account of her attachment to their mutual friend and benefactress the Queen Philippa, whom she gratefully and affectionately served during the period of her declining health,—the fine qualities of that high-minded woman amply claiming all her solicitude.

It was during the season of his courtship that he translated the "Romaunt of the Rose," the most esteemed poem of the middle ages. This he addressed to his love Philippa; and it is worthy of observation, as the circumstance is connected with his gallantry, that he has wholly

omitted in his translation, as it has come down to our hands, an uncomplimentary attack of considerable length upon the female sex.

The Romaunt of the Rose was the joint production of William de Lorris and John de Meun. Some controversy has existed as to the portion to be ascribed to each author. The original poem consists of upwards of 20,000 verses, or lines ; and at the 11,135th verse, an intimation occurs that at that period of the composition the labour of the former author ceased. Mr. Godwin, in his comprehensive history of the life and age of our poet, has decided that the whole was written before the year 1282, John de Meun having commenced his task, as he himself states, forty years after the death of William de Lorris. With all its faults of immense prolixity, of uninteresting allegory, of wearisome and flat diction, there nevertheless occurs, ever and anon, in the waste of words, a green spot on which the parched reader reposes, and forgets the pain of all his former travelling. In a careful analysis of the work, Mr. Godwin sums up his review of the first 3000 lines with the following handsome panegyric:—"On the whole, it may safely be affirmed, that the first 2950 verses of William de Lorris may challenge a comparison with most of the happiest effusions of the genius of poetry: they exhibit an admirable variety of talent; and it will be found difficult to pronounce from the perusal, whether the author excels most in the richness of his descriptive powers, in the spirit and force of his allegorical paintings, or in the acuteness and exactness of his observations upon life and manners." Chaucer either did not translate the whole of the original poem, but purposely avoided some portions, for the reason already described; or large masses of it have been lost, since his translation comprises no more than 7698 verses.

In the year 1369, or when Chaucer was at the age of forty-one, he lost his amiable friend and patroness, the Duchess Blanche, who survived the queen but a few months. She was in her thirtieth year, and the combined circumstances of her youth, virtues, and many charms, together with the sorrowing of her husband, gave rise to the production of the poem of "The Book of the Duchess," or, as it has been improperly entitled, "The

Dream of Chaucer," one of the most simply and strikingly beautiful of all his compositions. The authoress of "The Loves of the Poets" has described this elegant piece in the following animated strain :—"The description of Blanche in the 'Book of the Duchess' shows how trifling is the difference between a perfect female character in the thirteenth century, and what would now be considered as such. It is a very lively and animated picture. Her golden hair and laughing eyes ; her skill in dancing and sweet carolling ; her 'goodly and friendly speech ;' her debonair looks ; her gaiety that was still 'so womanly ;' her indifference to general admiration ; her countenance 'that was so simple and so benigne,' contrasted with her high-spirited modesty and consciousness of lofty birth;

> 'No living wight might do her shame,
> *She loved so well her owen name ;*'

her disdain of that coquetry which holds men in 'balance,'

> 'By half-word or by countenance ;'

her wit, 'without malice, and ever set upon gladness ;' and her goodness, which the poet, with a nice discrimination of female virtue, distinguishes from mere ignorance of evil ; for though in all her actions was perfect innocence, he adds,

> 'I say not she had no knowing
> What harm was ; for, else, she
> Had known no good—so thinketh me ;'

are all beautifully and happily set forth, and are charms so appropriate to woman as *woman*, that no change of fashion or lapse of ages can alter their effect. Time

> 'Can draw no lines there with his antique pen.'

But afterwards follows a trait peculiarly characteristic of the women of that chivalrous period. She was not, says Chaucer, one of those ladies who send their lovers off

> 'To Wallachie,
> To Prussia, and to Tartary,
> To Alexandria ne Turkey ;'

and on other bootless errands, by way of displaying their power ;

> 'She used no such *knackés small*,'

(that is, she was superior to such frivolous tricks.)

"John of Gaunt, who is the principal speaker and chief mourner in the poem, gives a history of his courtship, and tells with what mixture of fear and awe he then, 'right young,' approached the lovely heiress of Lancaster: but bethinking him that heaven could never have formed in any creature so great beauty and bounty 'withouten mercy,' in that hope he makes his confession of love; and goes on to tell us, with exquisite *naïveté*,

> 'I wot not well how I began,
> Full evil rehearse it I can:
> * * * *
> For many a word I overskipt
> In telling my tale—for pure fear,
> Lest that my words misconstrued were.
> Softly, and quaking for pure dread
> And shame,—
> Full oft I wax'd both pale and red;
> I durst not once look her on,
> For wit, manner, and all was gone;
> I said—"Mercy, sweet!"—and no more.'

Then his anguish at her first rejection, and his rapture when, at last, he wins from his lady

> 'The noble gift of her mercy;'

his domestic happiness, his loss, and his regrets, are all told with the same truth, simplicity, and profound feeling. For such passages and such pictures as these, Chaucer will still be read, triumphant as the poet of nature over the rust and dust of ages, and all the difficulties of antique style and obsolete spelling; which last, however, though repulsive, is only a difficulty to the eye, and easily overcome."

In a few months after the death of the duchess, Philippa, being now released from her willing and affectionate bondage of attendance upon her friends, became the wife of our poet.

During the course of the forty-fifth year of the reign of Edward III., we find that Chaucer was despatched by that monarch upon a commission, with other persons, to treat with the republic of Genoa. The object of this embassy, which has hitherto been a matter of speculation with the biographers of the poet, is conjectured to have comprised an authority on their part to treat with that flourishing and energetic republic for the hire of ships for

the king's navy: the naval appointment of Britain in that era being but slender, the deficiency was supplied by hiring those of the republics of Germany or Italy. This negotiation Chaucer executed with so much discretion and ability, that, as we shall immediately proceed to show, it gained him fresh marks of his employer's approbation and partiality.

Some time after the period of his marriage, Chaucer received another proof of royal favour, in the grant of a pitcher of wine to be furnished to him daily; and this was quickly followed by his being appointed comptroller of the customs for wool, woolfels, and hides, with an especial clause subjoined to the patent, that the duties of the office should be performed in person, and even that the accounts should be written with his own hand. This proviso on the part of Edward has been sneered at, and apparently not without reason by those who uphold the system of creating places of emolument for the sole purpose of maintaining persons, who it is not intended should fulfil the duties connected with them. If the entire labour of an office be performed by hirelings, these should either derive the whole benefit attaching to it, or the salary of the ostensible and inefficient clerk becomes an absolute injustice inflicted upon the people who are required to raise that salary. Chaucer was, however, no drone in the common hive; he filled this situation with unimpeached honour and integrity, and at the time when places of the same description, in the old age and weakness of the king, were farmed out, and the people compelled to pay for services not performed, no shade of imputation for such unworthiness attaches to the poet's memory. No one, as he says of himself, could "speak evil of his administration;" also, that he "never defouled his conscience for any manner of deed." This life is too short, and too full of sorrows, not of our own seeking, for us to add to their number by acts of baseness and dishonour.

In the forty-seventh year of the poet's age, and the forty-ninth of the king's reign, he received from Edward a grant of the lands and body of the son of Sir Edmond Staplegate, in the county of Kent, in ward, for which he was subsequently paid one hundred and four pounds; and in the following year the royal patron bestowed upon

him, by the title of "dilectus armiger noster," (our beloved squire,) the sum of seventy-one pounds four shillings and sixpence, being a forfeit of custom dues levied upon a citizen of London for non-payment upon a quantity of wool. These casual benefits, together with his permanent offices of emolument, contributed to render him a very wealthy man; Speght indeed, one of his historians, states that he had at this time almost one thousand pounds per annum. He himself in the "Testament of Love," acknowledges his advanced fortunes, and says; "I had comfort to be in that plight, that both profit were to me *and my friends;*" an unconscious insinuation on his part that he was not a selfish character. Again, he avows that "in dignity of office he made gathering of those goods, and had a fair parcel for the time, in farthering of his sustenance, riches sufficient to waive necessity, dignity to be reverenced in worship, power to keep from enemies;" so that, "he seemed to shine in glory of renown, as manhood asketh in men."

During the period that Chaucer was engaged in the performance of public duties, such as the executing of foreign missions; keeping with his own hand a punctual record of duties received for goods exported and imported; together with the frequent demands that must also have been made upon his time in attending upon the court, it may not be considered irrelevant to remark, how little these common places of life appear to have damped the wing of his genius, or relaxed the elasticity of its energy. So true is the observation, that where the intellectual elements are robust, compression serves but to increase the desire and ability for exertion; and, indeed, short of the bounds of pure impossibility, it should seem difficult to lay down a line of demarcation for a man of genius and industry: there is no saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther;" for the more such a man undertakes, the more his capacity appears to dilate,—will and accomplishment proceed in arithmetical progression. At the period of his life when our poet was both variously and actively engaged, he produced the greater portion of his poetical works. In addition to a number of minor compositions, he translated (as already recorded) "The Romaunt of the Rose," a work of considerable extent;

"The Complaint of the Black Knight;" "The House of Fame," a most noble and original performance, in three books; the "Legend of Good Women;" "Chaucer's Dream;" "The Book of the Duchess;" "The Assembly of Fowls;" "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," with many minor productions, comprising more than 25,000 lines.

The Duke of Lancaster, with all his noble qualities, was a man of towering pride and ambition; and, as is usually the result when this latter quality once takes possession of the mind, he did not permit the delicacies of justice to obstruct the accomplishment of his desires. Upon the death of his elder brother, the Black Prince, he is represented as having fixed a steady and craving eye upon the crown, omitting no available means to secure to himself the succession, in the event of the demise of the aged king his father. And indeed, so passionately was he in love with dominion, that, rather than not be a king, he was content to ally himself with the disreputable Peter the Cruel, connecting himself with the ruined and disjointed family, by marrying the daughter Constance; and this for the sole purpose of succeeding to the title of King of Castille. In order, however, to realize the darling object of his ambition—the inheritance of the English crown, he moved every engine in his power to lessen that of the established clergy, knowing that they were opposed to his views, and strenuous for the legitimate succession. He therefore espoused the doctrines and cause of the first great ecclesiastical reformer, Wickliffe, industriously exasperating against the regular clergy the popular discontent, which had at this early period become prevalent and inveterate, by reason of their disgusting appetite for obtaining possession of all the places of trust and honour.* Chaucer,

* The following may be received as a sample of the justice of the nobles' and people's discontent. "The Archbishop of Canterbury was lord chancellor; the Bishop of Bath and Wells was lord treasurer; the archdeacon of Lincoln, privy seal; David Weller, parson of Summersham, master of the rolls; ten beneficed priests, civilians, masters in chancery; William Mulse, dean of St. Martin's-le-Grand, chamberlain of the exchequer, privy purse, and master of the jewel house; William Ashton, archdeacon of Northampton, chancellor of the exchequer; William Dighton, prebendary of St. Martin's, clerk of the privy seal; John de Troy, priest, treasurer of Ireland; Snatch, parson of Oundle, master of the wardrobe; John Newham,

no doubt from an honest impulse of opposition to the same establishment, aided also by an interested desire to promote the views of his patron, became involved in his intrigues, and essentially helped forward the cause of the Reformation by his formidable attacks upon the weak and corrupt branches of the ecclesiastical government. His innate love of justice and liberality, however, would not suffer him to become an undiscriminating and malignant opposer; if therefore he lashed the whole body of the clergy in the "Plowman's Tale," and in his treatise entitled "Jack Upland," * he has rarely omitted availing himself of the opportunity of eulogizing such individuals as were worthy of their calling; a beautiful instance of this occurs in his character of the Poor Parson, in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

There have not been wanting partisans of Chaucer, who either from affected zeal for his reputation, or from religious partisanship, have ventured to question the fact of his being author of "Jack Upland," and of "The Plowman's Tale:" could such persons, however, reduce their speculation to a matter of certainty, they would but leave the opinions of the poet unchanged; for there is abundant proof remaining scattered through various productions, unquestionably his writing, which stamp him the enemy of corrupt priestcraft, and the friend of ecclesiastical regeneration. The "Romaunt of the Rose" contains some bitter invectives against the ecclesiastics; and the same spirit frequently betrays itself (indeed upon every given occasion) throughout the Canterbury Tales. These two important works having been written at the extreme periods of his literary life, rationally involve the conclusion, that, whatever may have been the complexion of his religious faith, his opinions regarding the necessity for a moral reformation in the lives of the priesthood remained unchanged. The venerable heretic, John Fox,

parson of Fenny Stanton, one of the chamberlains of the exchequer; John Rousbic, parson of Harwick, comptroller and surveyor of the king's buildings; and Thomas Britingham, parson of Ashby, treasurer for Guienne, and marshal of Calais."—*Life by Urry.*

* Mr. Godwin is of opinion that these two treatises were not written by Chaucer; but, that, "both in language and sentiments, they appear to belong to a later period."—*Life of Chaucer*, vol. ii. 4to. p. 402.

after alluding to the industry of the popish clergy in quenching and stamping into the earth those treatises which tended to overthrow the fabric of their hierarchy, considers the preservation of the above works of our poet in the light of an especial providence. When in his zeal, however, as a seceder from the "Mother Church," he proceeds to class Chaucer among the *doctrinal* reformers, and as an uncompromising Wickliffite, he evidently endeavours to "prove too much," or the confession on the part of the subject of our memoir must become valueless. The following is the passage from Fox referred to :—"I marvel to consider this, how that the bishops condemning and abolishing all manner of English books and treatises which might bring the people to any light of knowledge, did yet authorize the works of Chaucer to remain still, and to be occupied, who no doubt saw in religion as much almost as we do now, and uttereth in his works no lets, and seemeth to be a right Wicklivian, or else there was never any; and that all his works almost, if they be thoroughly advised, will testify (albeit it be done in mirth and covertly), and especially the latter end of his third book of 'The Testament of Love,' for there purely he toucheth the highest matter, that is, the communion, wherein except a man be altogether blind he may espy him at the full; although in the same book (as in all other he useth to do) under shadows covertly, as under a vizor, he suborneth truth in such sort as both privily she may profit the godly-minded, and yet not be espied of the crafty adversary; and therefore the bishops, belike taking his words but for jests and toys, in condemning other books yet permitted his books to be read. So it pleased God then to blind the eyes of them for the more commodity of his people, to the intent that through the reading of his treatises, some fruit thereof might redound to his church, as no doubt it did to many. As also, I am partly informed of certain which knew the parties, which to them reported that by reading Chaucer's works they were brought to the true knowledge of religion: and not unlike to be true, for to omit the other parts of his volume, whereof some are more fabulous than other, what tale can be more plainly told than 'The Tale of the Ploughman,' &c." The solution of the above question appears to be

this; either that the bishops felt the task to be hopeless, of annihilating the polemical treatises of so popular a writer as Chaucer; or, that they were satisfied with his confession of faith, considering it an answer to the partisans of the new heresy: if these, therefore, derive matter for congratulation from the same source, the result must involve the unpleasant dilemma that he was either a "Trimmer," or at best an unsatisfactory champion for either cause.

But to return to the proceedings of our poet's patron, the Duke of Lancaster. Although he numbered many partisans among the nobility, and was tacitly countenanced by the king himself (who favoured the doctrines of Wickliffe) in his opposition to the clergy; the wary old monarch was nevertheless not blind to the motive which had roused his son to that action; he therefore promptly resolved upon the wise and just course of obviating future discord and commotion, by declaring Richard of Bourdeaux, son of the Black Prince, heir to the crown, to the no small envy and mortification of the Duke of Lancaster.

The next public employment in which we find Chaucer engaged, is that of ambassador, having been sent out to France in conjunction with the Earl of Huntingdon and Sir Richard Sturry, to negotiate a match between the daughter of the French king, and the young Prince of Wales, afterwards Richard II. But the mission terminated only in obtaining a prolongation of a truce between the two countries, which had been infringed on the part of the French, who had infested our coasts, disturbing the course of trade.

Richard II. having succeeded to the crown of his grandfather, June 21, 1377, the Duke of Lancaster, who was appointed to the principal share in the regency of the kingdom (for at his accession the young monarch was but eleven years of age), resolved to ingratiate himself with the people by solemnizing the coronation with unwonted state and splendour: previously to the ceremony therefore, a court of claims was instituted, for the purpose of ascertaining the right of those persons who advanced any pretension to minister upon the occasion. Among these, Chaucer put in his claim in behalf of his ward, the son of Sir Edmond Staplegate, who was possessed of the manor

of Bilsington in Kent, which was held of the crown by the service of presenting to the king three maple cups on the day of his coronation. This manor had been purchased by Sir Edmond Staplegate of the father of Richard Fitz-Allen, Earl of Arundel, whose family had been in long possession of it; and it was set forth in Chaucer's petition that the manor was held by grand sargeantry, by the owner's discharging the office of chief butler at the king's coronation. But Richard, Earl of Arundel, controverted this claim, and by his petition and plea set forth, that the office of chief butler belonged to his family, and was never annexed to the manor, his ancestors having enjoyed it both before they held that manor and since they parted with it, and therefore he demanded it as his proper right. The issue of this business was, that the earl so far carried his point before the Duke of Lancaster, then acting as lord high steward, as to be allowed to officiate for that time, with a *salvo jure* that it should not infringe the right of Edmond Staplegate, or any who should pretend title for the future. This ward of our poet died about thirteen years after, but the manor continued in the family till the beginning of the reign of Henry VI.*

Among other acts in the first year of his reign, Richard confirmed to Chaucer the grant of twenty marks per annum made by the late king;—also the grant of the daily pitcher of wine: and in the following year we discover him under the immediate protection of the monarch with regard to his lands and possessions, probably from some embarrassment in his circumstances. Speght infers that his troubles arose from his having sided with the common people in their political contentions, but that era in his life had not yet arrived. Whether his difficulties at this time arose from a disregard of economy, or from a munificent spirit when engaged in foreign embassies, it would be difficult at this distant period to determine.

In the fourth year of the reign of Richard II., that prince confirmed to Chaucer and his wife Philippa the annuity grants that had formerly been made to them; (that to the latter for her assiduous attendance upon her queen) and on the 8th of May, 1382, he received in addition to his former appointment in the customs, the

* Bell's edit. Chaucer, Life, p. 29.

comptrollership of smaller customs; to be discharged by himself or by a competent deputy, for whom he might be willing to become responsible. About the same period too, the poet's son, Thomas, married Matilda, daughter of Sir John Burghershe: she was one of the wealthiest heiresses of that time. The author of the life prefixed to Bell's edition, when recording the fact of Chaucer's embarrassment stated above, ventures an hypothesis that the circumstance might have arisen from his having made over all his personal estate to his son Thomas Chaucer, upon the marriage of the latter with the Lady Matilda Burghershe. Such a mode of accounting for the father's having thrown himself under the protection of the king, that he might be saved from his creditors, would, if it were true, place the poet's character in no very reputable light; as therefore the conjecture is advanced without the shadow of an authority to substantiate it, the question may be dismissed with no farther notice.

The opinions of Wickliffe that had for years been gathering heat and strength, at length exploded in the rebellion under the celebrated Wat Tyler. The doctrines of the illustrious reformer, however, were not uniformly propagated in the pure spirit of the heavenly promulgator of Christianity; for, one of Wickliffe's disciples, named Smith, was supported by men of substance and title, who always attended him armed. In their zeal for the cause therefore, Knighton, a mild writer of that time says, that, "what they could not convince by reason they terrified into opinion." This Mahometan mode of propagating religion, however, does not attach to the head of the new sect; but the coarser minded followers, as Tyler and his exasperated companions, wreaked their full vengeance upon the church dignitaries who fell under their power. They beheaded the Archbishop of Canterbury, who in all probability held the office of Lord Chancellor,* also the prior of St. John's near Smithfield, (who was lord treasurer,) burning the fine priory itself, and sacked several abbeys; among others those of Bury and St. Albans. The oppressions of the government, it is true, were the chief cause of Wat Tyler's rebellion, but it must be remembered that churchmen constituted the majority of the governors;

* See note, p. 16.

and though that unsuccessful rebel was doubtless guilty of many outrages, and innocent men suffered with guilty ones by the "wild justice" of himself and followers (the unfailing result of an injured and irritated people clutching the sword of administration), yet, upon reading the terms he stipulated for on behalf of himself and fellow commoners, they will be found, in the main, so just and rational as to sanction the resistance of the governed in the event of their not being complied with.

Neither Chaucer, nor any of the heads of the reforming party can be included in this rebellion, since the members of it made no exception in favour of the Duke of Lancaster, whose palace in the Savoy they burned down. Our poet, indeed, it appears, ceased to take any prominent part in the new doctrines, when he saw them and their authors abandoned by his patron; whose desertion of the cause bears date about the period that his hopes of success against the clergy for the fartherance of his own political views were dissipated. Although, however, he deserted the cause of the great reformer, denouncing his celebrated attack upon the eucharist, as "the doctrine of devils;" and finally declined supporting him in his appeal to the king against the chancellor and heads of the university, we should in justice add, that he was too high-minded a man to become an opponent and persecutor of the party he had relinquished; if he "withdrew his hand from the plough" of reform, and "turned back," he nevertheless exerted himself to mitigate the fiery zeal of less tolerant and weaker heads. "In particular, the industrious and elegant cultivators of science and intellect were always sure of his friendship. Dr. Nicholas Hereford, the most refined and virtuous of the adherents of Wickliffe, is said to have 'escaped the bitterness of death' through the interposition of the King of Castille; and even William de Swinderby, who seems to have been merely an unfortunate maniac, and who, being cited by Bokyngham, Bishop of Lincoln, to appear before him in his cathedral, was adjudged to be 'fit fuel for the fire,' owed his life to the accidental arrival of the same prince, who held among his various and extensive possessions the lordship of the castle of Lincoln. No Englishman was put to death for heresy during the life of the King of

Castille."* The part which Chaucer acted throughout this memorable struggle is somewhat difficult to be reconciled with great strength of mind and consistency, since in the "Testament of Love" he acknowledges the real presence in the sacrament; and in his retractation renounces all he may have written detrimental to the interests of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. In a question of faith, a man is at full liberty, it is true, to change his opinions; but the doing so at the last period of life is not entitled to high consideration, when neither mind nor body can be in its full condition of elasticity. Retractation in a question of religious creed at such a moment, must be lightly regarded by the philosophical mind; indeed, at any period of life, till the pointed question of Pilate—"What is TRUTH?" be decided, it is of little more importance (always providing that the motive be pure and conscientious) than changing the fashion of one's garment; for to use the homely but apt illustration of Selden; "one wears his doublet plain, and another slashed, but every man wears a doublet; so every man has a religion: we only differ about the trimmings."

We now come to the period of the poet's adversity and troubles. In the year 1384, the Duke of Lancaster having been charged by a friar, named Latimer, with an attempt to murder the king, the informant was secretly assassinated by Lord Holl and others, under whose custody he was placed, before he could clear his charge. However this black act may reasonably compromise the innocence of the duke, the historians and biographers of the period nevertheless agree in declaring the whole affair to have been a plot framed by his enemies; and the king, knowing the supple conscience of his infamous tool, Judge Tresilian, determined to bring him to trial. The duke knowing the danger in which he would be placed by trusting to the justice of his enemies with such a man at their head, stood upon his guard in the castle of Pontefract, till by the mediation of the dowager Princess of Wales, matters were arranged. His influence and interest, however, from this moment faded to a shadow, and when he deserted all his adherents and personal friends, and passed over sea, they, with the poet

* Godwin.

among the rest, began to experience the full weight of party animosity. The political opponents of the duke had long watched their occasion for revenge, and when it arrived they made ample use of it. By every possible means they could devise they oppressed his adherents, while these in turn resorted to the common alternative of exciting popular commotions. In one instance, Chaucer himself was not an unimportant engine. A man named John Comberton, or John of Northampton, a partizan of the duke's, having been elected Mayor of London, made strong interest to be a second time returned to the office, upon the ground that he would exert himself to reform the abuses which had crept into the government of the corporation. The contest ran so strongly that the citizens broke out into open insurrection, and Chaucer joined the party of Northampton. The riot, however, was quickly suppressed; one of the rioters was beheaded, the candidate Northampton taken into custody, and active search was made after our poet; but he had made his escape into Hainault, from whence he passed into France; and finding that the king was exerting every means to entrap him, he removed into Zealand. It appears, from collateral evidence, that his wife Philippa accompanied him in his exile. "Prudence (as Mr. Godwin observes) would have dictated their separation." The principal reason for his avoiding apprehension was, because he had heard it was the determination of the court to make him betray the authors of and principal agents in the insurrection.

He had now become a wanderer upon the earth, dreading to see the face of a stranger, lest he should prove an emissary from the court of his own country to entrap him. Several accomplices in the riot had also followed the poet in his exile, and these he generously supported from his own reduced means; and, as he himself says, remained abroad and "concealed their privitie longer than he should" for his own personal advantage; for his partisans at home had speedily made their peace with the government, by submission and acknowledgment of their offence: yet these with infinite baseness and ingratitude not only proceeded to blacken his character, but even contrived to cut off the remittance of his supplies. They

let his apartments, and never accounted to him for the rent, and in short, hoped to accomplish his death. He now deemed that farther maintenance of delicacy towards such partisans would be mere romance; he therefore determined upon returning home. We may here remark, as a strong corroboration in evidence of Chaucer's self-expatriation not having been altogether undertaken from selfish motives, but that he might screen his accomplices, the singular circumstance that during the whole period of his retirement his situation of comptroller was filled *by deputy*; indeed, when he was finally dismissed from office, neither Richard nor his ministers were the persons to offer him the indignity, but the celebrated Thomas of Woodstock, that king's bitter enemy, and for some time lord and master. He was, therefore, not wholly an exile in favour as well as in person, and he must have been certain that a voluntary confession and submission on his part, would at least prove equally advantageous to him as to the other members of the insurrection who had not enjoyed the court favour. He did return,—and had not long been home before he was arrested by an order from the king, and imprisoned, as it is supposed, in the Tower. Here he was subjected to a severe examination on the part of the council, with a design to draw from him the betrayal of his associates: he, however, evaded their object long, and with the utmost of his ingenuity, till they at length informed him that his only chance of obtaining the royal mercy was in exposing the secrets of his party. His tenacity of purpose now relaxed, and he disclosed all he knew, impeaching at the same time the persons who had been connected with him. This act in his life is the only one known, that has in any degree tainted his memory; yet it is not to be dismissed without extenuation; and for this end we shall prefer availing ourselves of the cool, philosophical, and eloquent defence of Mr. Godwin, to any arguments that we could offer in behalf of one of the most eminent as well as most estimable beings on "Fame's eternal bead-roll."

"This, undoubtedly, is the circumstance in the life of Chaucer which conveys the most unfavourable impression of him to modern times. He stands here in the light of a person who accepted the confidence of a certain party;

who, from the persuasion that they might safely trust him, was admitted into their secrets; who partook of their counsels, and shared their attempts; and who afterwards purchased his safety by betraying his associates. Nothing can justify such a conduct, but the supposition that the individual by whom it is adopted has been deluded into some project of an exceedingly criminal nature, that he is afterward led by his reflections to see it in its true enormity, and that no way remains to prevent the perpetration but by a judicial impeachment; such a situation is described in the person of Jaffier in Abbé St. Real's narrative of the conspiracy of Venice. In that case, the treachery employed may be admitted to be commendable, and in some degree to atone for the weakness and guilt incurred by the accuser in the beginning of the transaction.

"But the situation of Chaucer was by no means of this sort. The confederacy into which he had entered was probably a commendable one; and the end for which it had been formed had passed by, and the confederacy been dissolved, before Chaucer gave information respecting his associates.

"What, then, were the motives of his conduct? He has himself assigned one, in the indignation which he conceived against them. They had plotted to starve him, had cut off his supplies, and embezzled his income. He probably thought that no measures were to be kept with persons who had conducted themselves towards him so basely. He was impatient of being any longer accounted their ally. All that was resentful in his nature was stirred up at the thought of the treatment he had endured, and he felt as if it would be an offence against morality and human nature to suffer such villany to go unpunished. These sentiments are undoubtedly congenial with the mind of a man deeply injured; and especially when the injury proceeds from those for whom he has sacrificed much, whom he has liberally assisted in their difficulties, and for his connexion with whom he is even still suffering calamity and distress. Such sentiments may extenuate what is offensive in the conduct of Chaucer in this instance, but cannot justify it. He who pursues retribution for the offences of others should firmly refuse to obtain it by

any sacrifice of the dignity and rectitude of his own character.

"Perhaps, however, Chaucer was influenced in his compliance with the importunities and threats of the administration, by a certain degree of timidity and irresolution. This is a very common feature of human character; and though it must be confessed to be a blemish, is not destructive of the fundamental principles of a virtuous temper. Chaucer, it may be, was inaccessible to the attacks of corruption; he boasts very loudly, in the performance we are considering, (the 'Testament of Love,') of his unimpeachable integrity in the execution of his functions as a servant of the crown. He was not easily intimidated, or induced, by calamity or fear, to turn aside from his course: he was for a considerable period faithful to his engagements with his associates, and, as he tells us, 'conceled their privitie longer than he should.' Such a man might be an excellent member of private and domestic society, a true patriot, and a genuine lover of mankind; he might be a stranger to the selfish passions, and to that mutability which is so pernicious to the best purposes of life; generous, tender, affectionate, warm hearted, and charitable. With such endowments a man might have passed through life in twenty different stations, and not a speck of soil have fastened upon the whiteness of his actions; had not that single temptation occurred against which alone he was not proof, had not fortune maliciously conspired to direct her attacks against the only imperfect and vulnerable point in his nature.

"In estimating the morality of Chaucer's conduct on this occasion, it is also incumbent upon us to take into the account the length of his misfortunes and his imprisonment. From the documents and the reasonings we have produced it seems clearly to follow, that his confinement in the Tower endured for no less a period than three years. He had, perhaps, been an exile for two years previously to his imprisonment. He had passed through an accumulation of evils; starved for want of remittances abroad, and induced to sell the slender pittance which remained to him in the form of a pension, for subsistence. He whose resolution holds out during

five years of calamity and distress, is no fickle and effeminate character. If Chaucer, who had witnessed the anarchy of his country, and the tragical scenes which were transacted almost in his presence, who had been reduced to barter his last resources for bread, and who saw an affectionate wife and a cherished offspring in danger to perish for want, felt at length subdued and willing to give up somewhat of the sternness of his virtue, we may condemn him as moralists, but we cannot fail in some degree to sympathize with feelings which make an essential part of our nature.

"One idea arises in this place, which cannot fail to strike us as interesting and instructive. Chaucer tells us that his conduct in this instance involved him in a torrent of ill-will, and brought upon him the charge of being false, lying, base, and ungrateful. It was principally to defend himself against these charges, that he composed his elaborate performance of the 'Testament of Love.'

"It is probable that the lapse of a single generation would have blotted out from the memory of his countrymen these censures upon the 'father of English poetry.' Who now appears as his accuser? Chaucer: Chaucer only. We have no evidence but what we draw from this production,—that he was ever concerned in the turmoils of the city, that he was an exile, a prisoner in the Tower, and that he was finally led by resentment or by terror to the dishonourable act of impeaching his confederates. Little did the poet think, when he sat down to make this laborious apology for his conduct, that he was hereby perpetuating an imputation, which, without his interference, Time was preparing to blot out for ever from the records of memory, while his poetical compositions were destined to render him dear to the lovers of the muse as long as the English language shall endure. How feeble and erroneous are the calculations of the wisest of mankind!" *

Shortly after his enlargement from the Tower, that is, in the year 1389, he was appointed to the office of "Clerk of the Works," at a salary of two shillings per diem. The duty attendant upon his commission was, to superintend

* Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. 4to. edit.

the erection, repair, and embellishment of the king's mansions, parks, and domains. To the "Good Queen Ann" he was indebted, who obtained for him both his liberty and this appointment.*

It has been seen that by the retirement of the Duke of Lancaster from the country, our poet had become exposed to the rage of his enemies. These had multiplied since his late confession in the Tower. The conscience of the duke had also upbraided him on account of his disreputable connexion with Lady Swinford; he therefore resorted to the conventional mode of expiating his fault by separating himself from her. This proceeding multiplied the sum of Chaucer's perplexities, and naturally; for being connected by marriage with the sister of that lady, he was not merely deprived of those numerous services which a woman who possesses any influence over the mind or affections of her lord is always enabled to render to her relations and friends; but her very state of desertion afforded his opponents an additional means for triumph. This double abandonment on the part of the duke (that of his mistress and adherents) admits, however, of defence upon both points; upon the one, that he afterwards made ample restitution to an amiable and worthy woman for the false position in which he had placed her in society, by legally making her his wife; and on the other, that he had passed over into Castille for the purpose of claiming his right of succession to that crown. His success in this expedition appears to have been various and unequal; for although he failed in the main object of his attempt, that of being created king, yet he provided for his daughters; the one succeeding to be Queen of Castille, and the other Queen of Portugal. Like a sagacious warrior and politician both, he amply indemnified himself for his disappointment in the chief object of his ambition, by securing the next advantage to be drawn from his expedition—the accomplishment of wealth. Contemporary historians relate that he was attended on his return home by an accumulation of treasure that loaded forty-seven mules. His return, and the prosperous state of his revenue, gave new hopes to the party attached to him: his credit at court also had risen with

* Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. 4to. edit. p. 501.

his swollen fortune; so much so indeed, that the king, in full parliament assembled, created him Duke of Aquitaine, and commissioned him to go and preside over that fine principality.

With his dismissal of the Lady Catherine Swinford, the Duke of Lancaster did not abandon his long affection towards her; for, upon revisiting his native country, he made over to her grants and pensions of considerable amount, upon the ostensible plea of reward for the care she had bestowed in educating his two daughters, Philippa and Elizabeth; such at least is the reason conveyed in the words of the grant, which are these:—"For the good and agreeable service which our thrice dear and most beloved Lady Catherine Swinford, the mistress of our most beloved daughters, hath rendered to our said children, we have given and granted," &c. The real motive, however, for this manifestation of his gratitude and affection for her solicitude and gentle demeanour, appears to have been grounded in the reflection that she was the mother of another branch of his family,* to whom he had given the name of Beaufort, from a castle so called in Anjou, and which he inherited through Blanche of Artois, Queen of Navarre. This part of his family consisted of four children, viz.:—John Beaufort, afterwards Earl of Somerset; Henry Beaufort, afterwards the noted Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, and Lord Chancellor of England; Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorset, afterwards Duke of Exeter; and Joan, first married to Sir Robert Ferrers of Oversly, and afterwards to Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland. Chaucer, therefore, by his marriage with the sister-in-law of the Duke of Lancaster, became allied to eight kings, four queens, and five princes of England; to six kings and three queens of Scotland; to two cardinals, upwards of twenty dukes, almost as many duchesses of England; several dukes of Scotland, besides to as many potent princes and eminent nobility in foreign parts. But the lineal descendants of the poet, by the female line, had nearly succeeded to the crown of England; for Alice, the daughter of Thomas Chaucer, married the celebrated William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, whose name is so closely connected with

* Life, Bell's edit.

that of the masculine Margaret of Anjou. Richard III. declared John, Earl of Lincoln, the grandson of Alice by the Duke of Suffolk, heir to the throne in right of his mother, Elizabeth Plantagenet, eldest sister of Edward IV. Lincoln joined the party of the Duchess of Burgundy, who promoted the cause of the impostor, Lambert Simnel, and perished on the field of battle fought against Henry VII. at Stoke, in Nottinghamshire. Edmund de la Pole, brother of the preceding and last of the Suffolk family, was executed for an act of treason against the same monarch, he having been pardoned by him some years before, when in a sudden fit of passion he had killed a man. With Edmund, the lineage of Chaucer became extinct.

During the absence of Lancaster, Chaucer had secluded himself from the world in his lovely retreat at Woodstock, since become an object of deep interest from that circumstance, and exalted into equal celebrity with the Mantua of Virgil, the Vaucleuse of Petrarch, and the Valle delle Dame of Boccaccio. Few persons not wholly indifferent to the charm and sentiment of association, would pass Blenheim without turning their steps to this Mecca of our poet, there to offer the simple homage of admiration and gratitude due to extraordinary genius. Here may still be traced in his lines, as by a chart, the walks he was accustomed to take in the prime of the day, when the sun looked "ruddy and brode" through the morning vapour; when the dew, "like silver shining," was upon the "sweet grass," and his beloved daisy was beginning to unfold its pinky lashes. Here is still the rivulet by which he coasted, with its water "clear as beryl or crystal," and the "walled park of green stone;" here is the "fresh hawthorn in white motley, that so sweet doeth ysmell;" and the birds are cropping the "small buds and round blossoms;" and the "little well under the hill, with its quick streams and cold, and the gold gravel, and the banks environing, soft as velvet." How exquisite are these rural associations with the mind and habits of a great poet, compared with those of the artificial world! Who in thinking of Chaucer connects him with the comptrollership of the customs, or as page to Edward III.? Yet these employments, with all their temporal benefits,

brought with them much labour and anxiety; while the beneficent Spirit of Nature rewarded him during life with untroubled calm and happiness while a devotee at her shrine, and after death with a crown of glory, as fresh and vivid as the recurring flowers that she sprinkles over her green lap!

We have already observed that Chaucer's first residence at Woodstock may be traced back pretty accurately to the year 1359, and that a very considerable portion of his life was passed in this lovely retreat. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the two circumstances in his history,—of his seclusion there, and of his attendance at the Customs where he is reported to have so punctually made his "reckeninges." There he was, at all events, during the period just named; and, in his poem of the Dream, celebrating the marriage of John of Gaunt written years before, he describes himself

> "Within a lodge out of the way
> Beside a well in a forest;"

and in the same composition depicts the room in which his "dream" took place,—

> "In a chamber paint
> Full of stories old and divers,
> More than I can as now rehearse;"

yet he tells us that there were

> "On the walls old portraiture
> Of horsemen, hawkés, and of hounds,
> And of hurt deer, all full of wounds,
> Some like bitten, some hurt with shot."

Again, in his Book of the Duchess, written about the year 1370, his description is more minute;—

> "His chamber was
> Full well depainted, and with glass
> Were all the windows well yglaséd,
> Full clear, and not a hole ycrased[1]
> That to behold it, was great joy:
> For wholly all the story of Troy
> Was in the glazing ywrought thus;
> Of Hector and King Priamus,
> Achilles and King Laomedon,
> And eke Medea and Jason,

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[1] Ycrased—*écrasé*, broken.

Of Paris, Helen, and Lavine:
And all the walls with colour fine
Were painted, both the text and glose,[1]
And all the Romaunt of the Rose."

This lodge, within, or upon the border of Woodstock Park, we may infer was presented to our poet by Edward III. or his queen;—we may also infer that his presence was courted by his patrons, seeing that they had domiciliated him so near to the palace,—Woodstock being one of that king's residences. From first to last, Chaucer occupied this spot thirty years; for here, according to tradition, he translated the Romaunt of the Rose: here too, he wrote (or perhaps completed) his "Treatise on the Astrolabe," which he compiled for the use of his younger son, Lewis, then only ten years of age, but who was nevertheless so far advanced in learning as to desire his father's knowledge of the principles of astronomy; and here at the age of sixty years he commenced his grandest work—the one on which his fame reposes—the CANTERBURY TALES. That a book combining at one and the same time an extraordinary delineation of character, a delightful variety of incident, a richness of imagination, a vigour of style, and animation of manner almost beyond all precedent, should have been written by a man after he was sixty years old, fills the mind with wonder and admiration.

About four years after the period of his undertaking the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer again became a pensioner of the crown. In the month of February, 1394, he received an addition to his income in a bequest from the crown of 20*l.* per annum, about 360*l.* in modern money. Mr. Godwin assumes that his necessities had induced him to apply for this assistance; but as no document corroborating the conjecture exists, it were better for the character of our poet that it should be considered in the light of a free gift,—perhaps at the renewed instance of his staunch patroness Queen Ann, who did not die till June in the same year, and who with the zeal of a true female partisan, would keep no luke-warm and half measures with friendship. She *may*, therefore, in anticipation of her approaching decease, have been anxious to secure to him an ample independence.

[1] Glose—glossary, key.

This excellent woman, and who, on account of her amiable qualities had acquired the appellation of "The Good Queen Ann," was sister to the Emperor Winceslaus, King of Bohemia. She formed one of the noble sisterhood whom the muse of Chaucer delighted to honour. It was at her command that he wrote "The Legend of Good Women," in atonement, as reported, for the scandal that the poet had given the whole sex by recording the infidelity of the too light-hearted Cressida. Richard, however weak in head, possessed nevertheless a strong domestic affection : a proof of this appears in his having, in the bitterness of his anguish, ordered the palace of Sheen to be destroyed after the death of his consort, "who left behind her," says Mr. Godwin, "a character inexpressibly dear to the king and the nation."

The "Legend of Good Women," comprises the stories of Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle, Medea, Lucretia, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis, and Hypermnestra. Of these, some individuals will scarcely range under the title bestowed upon them ; seeing that, according to modern opinion, their conduct would be amenable to moral reproach. For his present purpose, however, Chaucer evidently satisfied himself with their truth and fidelity in love. But indeed, throughout the whole of this book, he appears to be inwardly smiling at the principle upon which he was required to write it, viz. that of making an *amende honorable* to the wounded fair ones. He has, therefore, not merely softened the tone of some of the narrations where these would have revolted the ear of his task-mistress, but he has, with an agreeable gallantry, somewhat exaggerated the treachery and infidelity of the betrayers of his heroines. He cautions his readers against the allurements of our sex in a spirit of badinage lurking beneath an air of gravity so pleasantly insincere, that one almost instinctively pictures his countenance at the moment of writing, with its downcast eyes and sweet-humoured smile. Thus, we have an instance at the conclusion of the story of Philomela:—

> "Ye may beware of men if that ye list:
> For all be[1] he will not for his shame
> Doen as Tereus, to lese[2] his name,

[1] All be—although. [2] Lese—lose.

Nor serve you as a murderer or a knave;
Full little whilé shall ye true him have,
(That will I say, all were he now my brother),
But if so be[1] that he may *have none other.*"

Again, at the end of the legend of Phyllis :—

"Beware ye women of your subtle foe,
(Since yet this day men may ensample see),
And *trusteth*[2] *now in love no man but me.*"

In the July following the death of Queen Ann, and while the Duke of Lancaster was abroad in France, his duchess, Constance, died, and was buried with suitable pomp and solemnity at Leicester. The duke returned at the close of the same year; and either not meeting, or conceiving that he did not meet, with a cordial reception at court, withdrew to Lincoln, the residence of his favourite, Catherine Swinford. His old attachment now revived; and although the person of the lady did not present those early attractions of youth and beauty for which she had been so celebrated, the qualities of her mind and heart were unaltered : to his honour therefore, he made her, by a formal marriage, that restitution already alluded to, and which she amply merited. The ceremony took place in 1396. This union in the first instance gave high offence to the ladies connected with the royal family; but the good sense, placable demeanour, and unaffected humility of their new relation so quickly smoothed the asperities of the whole court, that the king carried her with the duke over to France, when he married the daughter of the French king, whom, on account of her slender age, he placed under the education of this very Duchess of Lancaster.

The change of affairs that at this period had taken place in the family of Chaucer, proved of instantaneous advantage to himself. The king renewed the grant of twenty marks per annum bestowed by his grandfather, Edward III., and which, in his distress, the poet had been compelled to dispose of.

In the following year we find him in the receipt of a grant of a pipe of wine annually (the original grant of the pitcher daily, it is supposed, had been discontinued), to be

[1] That is, "unless he can have no other." [2] Trust—the imperative mood.

delivered from the Customs of the port of London by the chief butler, his son Thomas, who had been appointed to that office.

Shortly after the duke's last marriage, we find Chaucer in possession of the castle and park of Donnington, the noble presentation of his princely brother-in-law.* As every place of residence connected with our poet must be acceptable to the reader, we give the following account of this mansion by one of his biographers. "At present there is nothing to be seen of this ancient structure but what raises horror and concern: a battered gateway with two towers, and some small part of the shattered walls,

Gateway to Donnington Castle, the last country residence of Chaucer.

being all the remains thereof. The grounds about it and the ruins of it are choked with brambles and overrun with ivy: but lest the place of its situation should in a few years more be forgot, I shall, as plainly as I can, describe it. It lies half a mile to the right of Spinhamland (the ancient Spina of Antonius), a mile beyond Newberry, on the same side. As you go from London you pass over the river Kennet to the village of Dunnington, from which there is a pretty steep but pleasant ascent through a lane to a hill under the castle, where stands a seat formerly belonging to the Countess of Sandwich: from hence arises

* Godwin.

the castle-hill, very steep, and not unlike that whereon the observatory stands at Greenwich; and from this hill there is a very fine prospect of several counties. On the back of the castle are level grounds, woodlands, and enclosures. The castle itself stands in a pleasant park, in which there was a famous oak, called Chaucer's oak; under which, as tradition taught, he wrote several poems. Mr. Evelyn gives a particular account of this tree, and says there were three of them planted by Chaucer: the king's oak, the queen's oak, and Chaucer's oak." The tree particularly designated by Evelyn as the one which Chaucer himself planted, cannot of course be the oak under which "tradition teaches that he wrote several of his poems." Speght, when describing the Donnington estate and castle, speaks of "Chaucer's oak," as a well-known tree. Ashmole, the antiquary, says of Donnington Castle, that it "was erected by Sir Richard de Adderbury, and in process of time became the seat of Sir Geoffrey Chaucer, the prince of English poetry, who composed several of his pieces under an oak in the park." The *three* famous trees therefore, minutely described by Evelyn as forming excellent timber, "cutting a grain clear as any clap-board," were in all probability not planted with Chaucer's own hand, seeing that Speght, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, describes *the* oak,—Chaucer's,—as an old tree. They were fine specimens of vegetable growth, which the poet dignified with the names recorded above. "In this pleasant retirement, Chaucer spent the few last years of his life; living in honour, and esteemed by all, famous for his learning, not only in England, but in foreign countries."*

But these returning gleams of prosperity and happiness in his latter days became suddenly clouded by the death of his patron and relation, John of Gaunt. This event occurred on the 3rd of February, 1399. He was a prince who, in the face of a load of calumny, the major part of which arose from party fury and misprision of his motives of action, possessed nevertheless many noble and generous qualities. The unfavourable features in his character show him to have been haughty and resentful; in love with vulgar glory,—the ruling passion of his age,—

* Urry.

and a worshipper of dominion. Mr. Godwin, however, who has evidently undertaken the part of his eulogist, pronounces him to have been "ever loyal to his prince," adding, and apparently with justice, that he was "uniformly mild with the mild, discriminating in his friendships, constant in his attachments, fraught with the social spirit and with humanity, passionate for the glory, the liberties, and the literature of his country; of a large and liberal mind; a man whose affection to Chaucer does equal honour to both parties; and, in a word, as he has been held by a multitude of his countrymen from the fourteenth century to the present hour, one of the most honourable specimens of the character of an Old English Baron which the history of this island is able to exhibit."

Knighton, the historian, when speaking to the character and general disposition of John of Gaunt, calls him "the pious duke," and then adds,—"let no man wonder that I mention him by this appellation. He is well entitled to it, since in all his trials, the adversities he suffered, and the injuries that were maliciously heaped upon him, he sought no revenge, and gave no instructions to that purpose to persons who would readily have executed his commands, but cheerfully forgave every one who asked his forgiveness. In one instance, the apartment in which his plate was laid up was found to have suffered repeated depredations from certain of his servants or dependants, and, the malefactors being detected, the officers of his establishment to whom according to the customs of the times the local administration of justice belonged, proposed to execute summary justice upon them; but he forbade them to proceed, declaring that he would not consent that any man should be *put to death for his goods*, and ordering that the offenders should be dismissed, an oath being first exacted from them that they should wholly abstain from the family and palace of the king, from his own, and from those of his brothers."

The loss of this great man and constant friend so severely affected our poet, that the event, with the political troubles immediately succeeding upon it, probably hastened his own death, which happened in the following year. The great destroyer had cut the gordian knot of all his early attachments—wife, patron, the two queens,

the kind-hearted Blanche,—all had gone to their long home. He was left the only withered leaf upon that stately branch. We form no friendships in old age;—our early ones dissolved, nothing is left to us but to be consoled that those we loved have escaped the grief of surviving;—

> "Then on the ground, which is 'our' mother's gate
> 'To' knock with our staff early and late,
> And say to her, 'Leve[1] mother, let me in.'"

Chaucer had now wholly retired from the world, and shut himself up in his castle of Donnington.

During his abode here, the great revolution occurred, which placed upon the throne the son of his brother-in-law, John of Gaunt, young Henry of Lancaster, better known as Henry IV. Although such an event in a political point of view could not have been an unwelcome one to Chaucer, yet it is gratifying to contemplate his conduct upon the occasion. We do not find that with the worldling and courtier's insincerity he pressed forward to congratulate the successful usurper; or, which is infinitely worse, that he chuckled over the miseries of his late kind and generous, if weak, benefactor: yet this execrable baseness attaches to the memory of our poet's friend Gower, who, with the callous selfishness that not unfrequently accompanies a blind old age, was among the first to welcome the new sovereign, spurning at the same time his fallen master and patron. We may conceive how the generous and noble soul of Chaucer must have revolted at such miserable ingratitude in a brother poet. Mr. Godwin has heroically, and at considerable length, undertaken to defend the memory of Gower from the imputations cast upon it on account of this transaction. The writer of Chaucer's life prefixed to Urry's edition of the poet's works, remarks that "the respect Chaucer retained for his former master, Richard, and gratitude for the favours he had received from him, kept him from trampling upon his memory, and basely flattering the new king; as most of his contemporaries did, and particularly Gower, who, notwithstanding the obligations he had to Richard II., yet, when old, blind, and past any

[1] Leve—dear.

hopes of honour or advantage, unless the view of keeping what he enjoyed, basely insulted the memory of his murdered master, and as ignominiously flattered his murderer." Mr. Tyrwhitt also, when speaking of the same poet's work, the "Confessio amantis," says, that "every thing which Gower had said in praise of Richard in the first edition, *is either left out*, or *converted to the use of his successor*" in the second. Mr. Godwin is compelled to avow the correctness of this charge; and moreover to acknowledge that he received from Richard the order to write a new work: yet Mr. Godwin with an infelicity remarkable in so calm and close a logician, proceeds to argue upon a string of "probabilities" as to the obligations conferred upon Gower by Richard; and even in his zeal of begging the question, goes so far as to say, that "it is *probable* Gower obtained nothing but hopes and baffled expectation in return for what he had done;" concluding with a tone of triumph, as though he had thoroughly made out his case,—"such was the vast weight of *obligation* which the poor poet was bound for ever to remember." The poet, as a man of honour, or even of common generosity of spirit, was "bound to remember" that the person upon whom he had planted his heel was no longer "the fountain of honour," the dispenser of favours and pensions, but a fallen monarch, and an unhappy man.

Not one verse,—not one line, however, did Chaucer address in the way of adulation to the usurper. He never even alludes to him,—unless indeed an exception be made with regard to a couple of lines in the "Envoy" to some verses entitled, "Chaucer to his Empty Purse;" and when we consider the multitude of compositions that were written after his death, in imitation of his style and attributed to him, these may be of that number, for we have no proof of their authenticity: yet there is every plausible ground for concluding them to be Chaucer's; for after the revolution, he had returned to London to arrange his affairs at court, in consequence of Henry's having annulled all the grants and acts made during the last two years of his predecessor's reign. The compliment alluded to in the verses just mentioned (if compliment it may be called), is the following:—

"O conqueror of Bruté's * Albion,
Which that, by line, and free election,†
Been very king; this unto you I send;
And ye that which may all harms amend,
Have mind upon my supplication."

Mr. Godwin, heretofore so frequently quoted, argues somewhat hypothetically in endeavouring to throw a doubt upon the authenticity of these verses. He asks whether it is probable that the proprietor of a domain like that of Donnington Castle, the uncle-in-law of the powerful Cardinal Beaufort and his brothers, and father of the man who in the second year of the reign of Henry IV. was chosen speaker of the House of Commons, could be reduced to such extremity as not to have the means of conveying himself from London to his provincial home? To which we would reply, that in the first place, the poem is a humorous one; for in allusion to his poverty, he describes himself as being "shaven as nigh as any frere," (friar); and in the next place, having seen from his previous course of life, that he was a man of free and social habits, and by no means a methodical regulator of his expenses, we may infer that (poetically speaking) he *was* "shaven as nigh as any frere." Whether, however, he were a solicitor or not at the court of the usurper, that king in eighteen days after his accession renewed to him all his former grants, and five days previously to this ratification, of his own free will, settled upon him an additional pension of forty marks per annum.

A few months only previous to Chaucer's death, we find him renting a tenement situated in the garden of the chapel belonging to the convent of Westminster. The lease still exists among the records in the office of the dean and chapter of Westminster, and is made over to Chaucer by Robert Hermodesworth, keeper of the above chapel of St. Mary, and in the name of the abbot and prior of the convent. The term was for fifty-three years, but determinable by the death of Chaucer, at the yearly rent of fifty-three shillings and fourpence. The circumstance of his taking this lease, which is dated the 24th of

* Brute—the first conqueror of Britain.

† Mr. Godwin (no admirer of Henry) acknowledges that "the whole kingdom seemed, as it were by concert, to embrace the party of the invader."

December, can have no connexion with that of his coming up to London to sue for the restoration of his pensions, since they had all been settled upon him on the 18th of October before. One of the residences of our poet in London (probably the one in question) was at the sign of the Red Rose, in Palace-yard, Westminster, upon the site where Henry the Seventh's chapel now stands.

The hurry and turmoil of business in which he became involved at this late period of his life, and when he had reason to calculate that he should pass the remainder of his days in the amusement of his books and tranquil contemplation, together with the loss of near and dear social ties, all involved a change of habit and of feeling that few aged men could encounter with impunity;—to the poet, who was stooping under the weight of years with their attendant infirmities, it proved fatal. In the full enjoyment of his clear faculties, but with an exhausted frame, he died on the 25th of October, 1400, in the seventy-second year of his age.

As a proof of the activity and soundness of his perceptive faculties, he composed a few verses "upon his death-bed, when he was in great anguish," exposing the vanity of human wishes and endeavours, entitled "Good Counsel of Chaucer;" and beginning "Fly from the press,[1] and dwell with sothfastness."[2]

He descended to his grave in the fulness of a high reputation as an extraordinary genius, and a generous and noble-minded man. He was buried in the great south aisle of Westminster Abbey,—that quarter now so well known under the name of "Poets' Corner." Some writers have described that he was first laid in the cloister, and afterwards removed; but Caxton, (who may be relied on as an authority,) in his edition of the poet's works, states that he was buried in the Abbey church of Westminster, before the chapel of St. Ben'et (or Benedict). This account was written before the removal, alluded to above, took place.

There appears to be a considerable difficulty in ascertaining the exact depository of his remains; nor indeed does it seem clear that the present monument of him was erected over or even near to that spot: moreover, it is

[1] Crowd. [2] Truth.

not the original monument placed to his memory which, Speght says, contained the following verses,

> "Galfridus Chaucer, vates et fama poesis
> Maternæ, hac sacra sum tumulatus humo;"

but was erected by a Mr. Nicholas Brigham, of Oxford, in the year 1556, a gentleman who enthusiastically honoured the memory of the poet. Upon this monument, as represented in the title-page of the present edition, he caused Chaucer's portrait to be painted from that which was in Occleve, his scholar's book, and added the inscription, the whole of which is now obliterated.*

M. S.

Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim,
Galfridus Chaucer conditur hoc tumulo:
Annum si quæras Domini, si tempora vitæ,
Ecce notæ subsunt quæ tibi cuncta notant.

25 Octobris 1400.

Ærumnarum requies mors.

N. Brigham hos fecit Musarum nomine sumptus.

1556.

TRANSLATION.

He who was the most eminent of English poets — Geoffrey Chaucer—lies beneath this tomb: if you require the term of his life, and the year, the record is subscribed, which will inform you all.

25 October, 1400.

Death is the repose of sorrows.

N. Brigham placed these, in the Muses' name, at his own cost.

1556.

Around the edge of the tomb the following verses are said to have been inscribed, now also obliterated;—

> Si rogites quis eram, forsan te fama docebit;
> Quod si fama negat, mundi quia gloria transit,
> Hæc monumenta lege.

Should you inquire who I was, mayhap Fame will instruct you: but if Fame refuse (since the glory of this world passeth away), read this monument.

Chaucer, it is supposed, left both his sons behind him, although every trace of the younger one, Lewis, for whom

* It is to be hoped that there is truth in the report recently circulated, of a proposal having been made to restore this monument to its originally perfect state.

he wrote the Treatise upon the Astrolabe, has hitherto escaped the researches of inquirers. Thomas, the elder, rose to considerable eminence in the country : as already recorded, his daughter, by her marriage with de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, connected her family with the lineal inheritance of the crown. Thomas Chaucer successively rose to the offices of constable of Wallingford Castle; sheriff of Oxfordshire for life; chief butler of the household (all appointments of Henry IV.); and finally was elected speaker of the House of Commons. Both he and his daughter, the Duchess of Suffolk, were buried in the parish church of Ewelm in the county of Oxford, where some few remaining offices belonging to her mansion here, and the fish ponds that were in her garden, still exist. There is also a God's house adjoining to the church, built by the duchess and her consort, the establishment of which retains its original character.* (1803.)

The person of Chaucer was of middle stature, in advanced years inclining to corpulency. In his journey with the Pilgrims to Canterbury, mine host of the Tabard takes occasion to jest with him upon this point;—comparing both their persons, he says,

> "Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;
> He in the waist is shap'd as well as I;
> This were a poppet in armés to embrace," &c.

His face was full and smooth, betokening regular good health, and a serene and cheerful frame of mind. His complexion was fair, verging towards paleness : his hair was of a dusky yellow, short and thin ; that of his beard grew, or rather perhaps it was fashioned into a forked shape, and its colour was wheaten. He had an expansive and marble-like forehead, fair and unwrinkled; his eyes constantly tended towards the ground,—a habit he has likewise given occasion in the host to notice :—

> "What man art thou, (quoth he,)
> That lookest as thou wouldest find a hare?
> For ever on the ground I see thee stare."

The general expression of his countenance combined a mixture of animation, of lurking, good-natured satire, of unruffled serenity, sweetness, and close thought. As in

* Godwin, Life, 4to, vol. ii. p. 557.

the above passages from his great poem we are let into a lively portrait of some of his personal peculiarities, so in the "Testament of Love" as perfect an idea of his actions and manner in conversation are farther displayed; so that one may almost fancy one's self in the prison with him, listening to his discourses on philosophy. "The downcast look, (says Urry,) the strict attention, the labouring thought, the hand waving for silence, the manner of address in speaking, the smooth familiar way of arguing, the respectful way of starting his objections, and, in short, every expression in that dispute, figures a lively image of him in the mind of the reader."

His features, as in most instances of sincere and transparent natures, were an index of his temper, and this comprised a mixture of the lively, grave, and modest. Yet was the gaiety of his disposition more prominent in his writings than in his general demeanour, which, it may be, was repressed by his modesty. This bashfulness it was, which gave occasion to the Countess of Pembroke often to banter him; declaring, that his absence was preferable to his conversation, since the latter was naught, on account of his reserve and distant respect; whereas, when he was away from her, the chance was, he might be preparing some composition to afford her delight. His behaviour with the pilgrims is uniformly in keeping with this habit of silence and seclusion. He scarcely appears in person, and when called upon for his tale, endeavours to avoid the task by singing a ballad; the host, however, protesting against this departure from the general compact, his own story (or rather discourse) is one of the least interesting in the whole series.

His youth was not altogether free from the indiscretions natural to a man surrounded by the beauty and wit of an admiring court; that he was not even tainted, however, with the vacillation and heartlessness of the mere debauchee and man of pleasure, is evident from the single circumstance of his steady courtship of the lady who ultimately became his wife, which continued for eight years. Besides, his constant behaviour towards women, and his exalted admiration of them, at once exempt him from being a coarse or common intriguer. Many of his tales are questionable in their morality, (and these in after

life he repented having penned,) but it is strongly doubtful (coarse as they are) whether they would so surely sap the structure of a well-educated young mind as many productions of some modern writers, and which are nevertheless found in almost every bookcase in the kingdom.

During his relaxations from the duties of public business, he continually retired to his study. Reading, indeed, was his chief delight, as appears, by his own confession, in the introduction to his "Dream," and to the "Legend of Good Women." He preferred it to every amusement, with the exception of a morning walk in May-tide. He lived almost exclusively in his own world of meditation, never interfering, as he says of himself, in the concerns of others. He was temperate and regular in his diet; he "arose with the lark, and lay down with the lamb:" hence the marvellous truth and freshness of his early morning pictures, not inferior to the celebrated "Castle Landscape" of Rembrandt; and this is the most perfect representation of a morning twilight that, perhaps, ever was painted.

The career of Chaucer, from whichever point we may view it, assumes a character greatly elevated above that of ordinary men. He was a poet, a philosopher, an astronomer, a logician, a linguist, a politician, a theologian, a humanist, a gentleman in the modern acceptation of the term, and a virtuous man. His conduct as a man holding a public office stands unimpeached for integrity. He was a gentleman,—for he was the universal theme of admiration in a refined court—particularly by the women, and they rarely err in making a correct estimate of a man's temper and habits. He was a humanist, for he has ever at hand an apology for the frailties of our nature;—above all, when he would atone for the lapses of the *most* responsible and the *least* excused of our race —the women. Proofs of this may be seen scattered over all his works, but it shines forth most conspicuously in his divine poem of Troilus and Cressida, where his pleadings for the error of that too light heart may, without profaneness, be ranked with the conduct of HIM, who bade her sister delinquent to "go and sin no more."

In his public capacity, as a politician and theological

controversialist, he appears to have been an opponent of abuses rather from a spirit of party than from an active principle of justice, or from consciousness of the truth: for we find that in the one instance he aided a body of insurgents because they were the partisans of his patron; and in the other he withdrew his opposition to the priesthood when he found that the duke himself no longer made it a handle for promoting his ambitious views with regard to the succession. Indeed we do not find it confirmed that he sided with Wickliffe upon points of faith or doctrine, but in exposing the abuses of his mother church. He was a *reformer*, not a *seceder*; he would have restored the Catholic worship to its primitive purity, but he would not have removed one stone of the fabric. This opinion is borne out by his confession of faith, wherein he subscribes to the whole rubric. Wickliffe applied his battering-ram at one of its main corner-stones—transubstantiation. For one of lively imagination, strong sensitiveness, and of devotedness to the gentler luxuries and enjoyments of life, Chaucer was an active and steady partisan in the cause of reform; but a temperament like his was not calculated to make thorough work in a contest with the knitted phalanx of corruption. Such as he are not the wedge to split the "gnarred and stubby tree" of a full-grown opinion. The man of imagination is seldom calculated to maintain an up-hill struggle in the cause of reform; and the most unflinching and uncompromising soldiers, whether for an opinion, or for hire, are not always men of excessive imagination; the poets have not been the stubbornest of patriots. Milton, indeed, and Marvell, with one or two honourable examples in our own age, form sweeping exceptions to this rule; but they almost confirm it.

Many of the tales of Chaucer, which are paraphrastical translations from the Latin and Italian languages, prove him to have been a linguist of no ordinary standard; and his prose essays stamp him a logician. It has been already shown that he was well versed in the science of astronomy—as much of it at least as was known in that age. That he was a philosopher in the most practical acceptation of the term,—that of humanizing his fellow creatures, and making them happier as well as wiser, we

need only refer to the best and most carefully written of his poems.

As a poet, his chief power lay in humour and description of character; in the latter his success was marvellous; whatever object it is his purpose to delineate, he inspects, and probes, and twists, and turns it on every side, as a botanist pores into a flower; and then he presents it to you clothed in the minute perfection of a Dutch painting, with the charms of ease, grace, and freedom superadded. So patiently did he study the characters of the people he described, that he seems not to have more closely examined their costumes (accurately as he did this) than he did their habits of thought. Hence, the speeches he puts into their mouths are so truly in keeping, that their great merit almost becomes neutralized in the mind; for we feel that he merely put down what he heard as well as what he saw, when describing his characters. In this qualification he strongly reminds us of Shakspeare. The first remark made to us by one who had read for the first time his Prologue to the Canterbury Pilgrims, was, that "it detracted materially from Mr. Stothard's fame in illustrating it, for that all was there, ready fashioned to his hands." In this very Prologue the portrait of the shipman is a striking likeness to this day. His action on horseback is not yet more accomplished: he still makes progress, as Butler humorously describes him, as though he were "rowing the horse." The doctor of physic "reading little in his bible," playing into the apothecary's hands, regulating his diet, and eating that which is most nutritious; the showy wife of Bath, so trim about the ankles, with her new tight shoes, and stockings gartered up without a wrinkle; the reeve (or steward), contriving to lay his lord under obligations by advancing him money in his necessitous extravagance; the sergeant-at-law, than whom no man was more busy, "and yet he seemed busier than he was,"—are all as truly pourtrayed as the reflections in a camera lucida. Mr. Godwin truly observes of this Prologue, that "it is a copious and extensive review of the private life of the fourteenth century in England."

The Canterbury Tales, indeed, taken as a whole, may be considered one of the most splendid monuments of

human genius. Like Shakespeare again, it would be difficult to decide in which style lay Chaucer's great power,—the humorous or the pathetic. It is to be regretted that his tales of the former cast should be, almost without exception, either positively nasty or unjustifiably licentious; yet, are they related with a spirit, vivacity, and ease, that have never been surpassed. Full extenuation for the coarseness of his stories, as well as for the startling nudity of various epithets and descriptions, will be made by every reader who has become acquainted with the history of the public exhibitions that were extremely popular during the age of our poet. It is difficult to reconcile the fact of ladies of elegant minds, graceful perceptions, and unaffected womanly tendencies, like the "Good Queen Ann," the Duchess Blanche, the Countess of Salisbury, and the Marchioness of Pembroke are described to have been, witnessing and deriving entertainment from the annual burlesque festivals that were in high vogue during their day; such as "The Feast of Fools," "The Feast of the Ass," and the feast of the "Lord of Misrule:" in which *ecclesiastics* and laymen, rich and poor assisted, all countenancing and committing monstrous ribaldries and indecencies. At the Feast of Fools during the service of mass, the ceremony was interrupted by the motley mob of masqueraders rushing into the church, uttering ribald jests, singing indecent songs, and discharging upon each other and the audience filth, and the bodies of dead animals. The author of the Life of Chaucer so frequently quoted (Mr. Godwin) has, with his accustomed philosophical spirit, satisfactorily pleaded the cause of his hero, and shown that however his mind was unavoidably tinged with the colour of custom, yet, that the splendour of his genius, and his natural perception of what was graceful and lovely should impress us with admiration, that in the midst of so much rudeness and ill taste he could preserve in so high a degree the purity of his thoughts. "Chaucer," he adds, "however superior he may be considered to the age in which he lived, had yet the frailties of a man, spent his days more or less in such scenes as have been described, and was acted upon, like other men, by what he heard and saw, by what inspired his contemporaries with approbation or with rapture."

The story of the Cock and the Fox, in the Nun's Priest's Tale, is allowed by all judges to be the most admirable fable (in the narration) that ever was written. The description of the birds, the delightful gravity with which they are invested with intellectual endowments, are conceived in the highest taste of true poetry and natural humour. How amusing is the classical tendency of Sir Chanticleer! and how playful and waggish his complimentary addresses to Dame Partelote!

"Madam Partelote, so have I bliss,
Of one thing God hath sent me largé grace;
For when I see the beauty of your face,
Ye be so scarlet red about your eyen,
It maketh all my dreadé for to dien:
For all so siker[1] as, 'In principio
Mulier est hominis confusio,'
(Madam, the sentence of this latin is,
'Woman is *manné's* joy and *manné's* bliss).'
For when I feel a-night your softé side
* * * * *
I am so full of joy and of solace
That I defy bothé sweven[2] and dream."

Great, however, as he confessedly is in the humorous, he claims our undivided love and admiration, when with his sweet and earnest sincerity he is detailing a story of pomp and chivalry,

"With mask, and antique pageantry;"

or tale of love "with honied dart." Here it is, that we feel his native feeling to blossom forth. The Knight's Tale, or the story of Palamon and Arcite, is a splendid succession of gorgeous scenery:—no description, perhaps, ever surpassed in power that of the Temple of Mars, and no death was ever more pathetically related than that of Arcite; a simple reiteration of tender regrets,—the sighs and sobbings of a broken and ebbing spirit:—

"Alas the woe! alas the painés strong,
That I for you have suffer'd and so long!
Alas the death! alas mine Emely!
Alas departing of our company!
Alas mine hearté's queen! Alas my wife!
Mine hearté's lady, ender of my life!
What is this world?—What asken men to have?
Now with his love, now in his coldé grave—
Alone—withouten any company.
Farewell my sweet! Farewell mine Emely!"

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[1] Siker—sure. [2] Sweven—another word signifying a dream.

The variety and fancy in the fairy tale of King Cambuscan and his Horse of Brass, given most appropriately to the young squire, is told in the fullest inspiration of oriental imagining.

The story of Constance, with all her trials and sufferings; driven about the sea "like an uprooted weed;" is one of the loveliest of his tales. So earnest is our author in his narration, and so eloquent is his pathos, that all the improbabilities in her adventures fade away before the mind cares to lay hold of them. Nature, truth, and steadfastness in love, shine forth from her heart, and rivet the attention and sympathy of the reader in a remarkable manner. There is a beautiful picture in this story of her little child standing at a feast where King Alla, her husband, is being entertained, and steadfastly looking in the face of his father, who is struck by the likeness of the child to his wife, whom he thought dead. It were to be regretted that the poet, in the conduct of his plot, did not evince somewhat more of versatility with regard to the agents employed. The two great catastrophes which befall Constance are each accomplished by the treachery of a wicked mother-in-law; moreover, after each event she is forced aboard the same vessel, and wanders alone about the sea. Yet, in the face of all these drawbacks, the fascination in this story is quite extraordinary. It is like an old legend, illustrating the beauty of holiness and fidelity in love. One can scarcely imagine that any person after reading it could feel no emotion at, or even an indifference to the sentiment of virtue.

But the finest in point of severely beautiful writing, is the celebrated history of the Marquis of Saluzzo and his wife Griselda. Mr. Godwin decides, that "it is the most pathetic that ever was written; and he who compares Chaucer's manner of relating it, with that of the various authors who have treated the same materials, must be dead to all the characteristic beauties of this history if he do not perceive how much Chaucer has outstripped all his competitors." This is the Clerk of Oxford's Tale, and the poet has expressly informed us in the Prologue to it, that he obtained it from Petrarch, the author, when he went to visit him in Italy. The story of Griselda is an embodying of the principles of Christianity; it is an exemplar

of the leading doctrines, an illustration of the key-stone that alone can bind together the arch of that religion. The whole conduct of the heroine is a fervid hymn in praise of patience, forbearance, and long-suffering. Not only does she not "resist evil," but she murmurs not: she is "smitten on the one cheek, and she turns the other." "The children of this generation, who are wiser than the children of light," are wont to read this history in the spirit of fair traders; they look at it as they would at their ledgers; and not being a regularly kept account of debtor and creditor, with a just balance struck in favour of the party to whom it is due, they pronounce it naught. She is called mean-spirited, and one whom her husband is almost justified in putting to those sharp trials, as he might a coral plant or an oyster. They appear to have overlooked the three grand points upon which the story is constructed, viz.—those of fidelity to her promise; strength of endurance in maintaining it; and stubbornness of principle in loving her husband "through good report, and through evil report." They who maintain that the character of Griselda is unnatural, know little of what woman's love is capable. Griselda loved her husband; it was therefore natural to her, in the true spirit of charity—or love, to "suffer all things, to believe all things, to *hope* all things, to sustain all things." Moreover, the author's business was to make out a strong case in praise of those virtues; and we know that the old writers, as may frequently be seen in their dramas, were special pleaders when they endeavoured to carry a point. That the marquis was unworthy of the love of such a woman, is but a type of every day's occurrence, and corroborates the fidelity to nature of the narrative. Yet again, we should bear in mind that it is only by means of the high relief into which such a character as that of Griselda is thrown, that we forcibly feel, and are disgusted with the dark cruelty of her persecutor; the ugliness of tyranny would cease to be revolting, if it were not contrasted with its opposite—forbearance: besides, but for the latter quality there could be no reformation; for, an injury fully resented, although it neutralize the offence, rarely leaves the injurer impressed with any other feeling than that of a desire to retaliate. Hence the rise of protracted feuds in a barba-

rous state of society; and hence, as mankind became wiser, have they perceived the value of kindness and forbearance, and the utter worthlessness of revenge. After all, few persons will impugn the principle of the story, and no Christian can: but the author himself anticipates the reader's objection as regards an overcharge of his characters, for he thus winds up his tale;—

> "This story is said, not for that wivés should
> Follow Griselda as in humility,
> For it were importable though they would;
> But for that every wight in his degree
> Should be constant in adversity
> As was Griselda, therefore Petrarch writeth
> This story, which with high style he enditeth.
> For since a woman was so patiént
> Unto a mortal man, well more we ought
> Receiven all in gree[1] that God us sent.
> * * * *
> Let us then live in virtuous sufferance."

The Pardoner's Tale of the three rioters who went out to kill Death, is both striking and original. The description of the old man, who turns out to be Death, and walks up and down like a "restless caitiff, knocking with his staff early and late at his mother's gate,"—the earth, is equal in vividness of colouring to any portrait in Dante or the Greek dramatists. With a happy observance of character, Chaucer has made this Pardoner, who is an itinerant preacher, and a great rogue to boot, constantly interrupt the progress of his tale with clerical denouncements against *covetousness*, *gluttony*, and *drunkenness*. With the Prioress's tale, which again is happily appropriated to her character, being an account of the miracle of a little Christian child murdered by Jews, and who after death continued to sing his 'Ave Maria,' the choicest of the Canterbury Tales may be said to have been enumerated.

Chaucer is, in one sense, the most matter-of-fact of poets. He describes and recapitulates, and describes and repeats, like one who having beheld a wonder for the first time, returns at every given opportunity to the object of his admiration. He is sometimes tedious in his descriptions; and this appears to arise from an anxiety on his own part, lest the reader should not be able to keep

[1] Receive in gree—to take kindly.

pace with him in feeling at once the full impression of the object he is delineating. The late Mr. Hazlitt, in his lectures on the poets, has most happily in one pithy sentence (a remarkable feature in his critical analyses) struck out Chaucer's poetical faculty. He says, "His poetry reads like history. Everything has a downright reality; at least in the narrator's mind. A simile, or a sentiment, is as if *it were given in upon evidence.*" Again: "He speaks of what he wishes to describe with the accuracy, the discrimination of one who relates what has happened to himself, or has had the best information from those who have been eye-witnesses of it. The strokes of his pencil always tell. He dwells only on the essential, on that which would be interesting to the persons really concerned: yet as he never omits any material circumstance, he is prolix from the number of points on which he touches, without being diffuse on any one; and is sometimes tedious from the fidelity with which he adheres to his subject, as other writers are from the frequency of their digressions from it. The chain of his history is composed of a number of fine links, closely connected together, and riveted by a single blow.

* * * * * *

"He is contented to find grace and beauty in truth. He exhibits for the most part the naked object, with little drapery thrown over it. His metaphors, which are few, are not for ornament, but use, and as like as possible to the things themselves. He does not affect to show his power over the reader's mind, but the power which the subject has over his own.

* * * * * *

"There is no artificial pompous display, but a strict parsimony of the poet's materials, like the rude simplicity of the age in which he lived."

It has already been observed that Chaucer was prone to be tedious in his descriptions. In his rural walks he is just as tedious as a sauntering companion by a wood-side, who is a devoted admirer of nature. He who would be impatient with the one for pausing at every furlong to remark and admire the shifting effects of light in the morning clouds, or to hearken to the whistle of the early birds, or to notice the varieties of foliage, the smell of

wild blossoms, the juicy freshness and vivid hue of tall plants that bow in graceful homage over the "huddling brook,"—such a one may easily be wearied with the description of the other, for it is commonly an accurate journal of his whole route.

The opening to "The Complaint of the Black Knight" contains a choice specimen of one of his walks: it runs on for ten or twelve verses in the following agreeable strain :—

> "I rose anon, and thought I wouldé gone
> Into the wood to hear the birdés sing,
> When that the misty vapour was agone,
> And clear and fair ywas the morrowning;
> The dew also like silver in shining
> Upon the leaves, as any balmé sweet,
> Till fiery Titan with his persant heat
> Had driéd up the lusty liquor new
> Upon the herbés in the greené mead;
> And that the flowers of many divers hue
> Upon their stalkés gonen for to spread,
> And for to splayé out their leaves in brede[1]
> Against the sun, gold-burnéd[2] in his sphere,
> That down to them ycast his beamés clear."

Again; the commencement of the "Flower and the Leaf" contains another journal of one of his early saunterings : how fresh and invigorating is this description of the effect of the spring showers !

> "When that Phœbus his chair of gold so high,
> Had whirléd up the starry sky aloft,
> And in the Bull was entered certainly,
> When showrés sote[3] of rain descended soft,
> Causing the ground felé[4] times and oft
> Up for to give many a wholesome air,
> And every plainé was yclothéd fair
> With newé green, and maketh smallé flowers
> To springen here and there in field and mead,
> So very good and wholesome be the showers,
> That they renewen what was old and dead
> In winter time, and out of every seed
> Springeth the herbé, so that every wight
> Of this seasón waxeth right glad and light."

The poet being unable to sleep, although, he says,

> "No earthly wight had more of hearté's ease
> Than I, for I n'ad sickness nor disease."

---

[1] In brede—abroad. [2] Gold-burnéd—burnished like gold. [3] Sote—sweet. [4] Fele—many.

At "three hours after twelve," therefore, he adds, I arose,

> "About the springing of the gladsome day,
>
> * * * *
>
> And to a pleasant grove I 'gan to pass
> Long ere the brighté sun uprisen was,
> In which were oakés great, straight as a line,
> Under the which the grass so fresh of hue
> Was newly sprung, and an eight foot or nine
> Evéry tree well from his fellow grew,
> With branches broad, laden with leavés new,
> That sprungen out against the sunné sheen;[1]
> Some very red, and some a glad light green." *

The poem of "The Flower and the Leaf" was especially favoured by the young poet, JOHN KEATS. The author may perhaps be pardoned for making a short digression upon the present occasion, to record an anecdote in corroboration of the pleasure testified by that vivid intellect upon his first perusal of the composition. It happened at the period when Keats was about publishing his first little volume of poems (in the year 1817); he was then living in the second floor of a house in the Poultry, at the corner of the court leading to the Queen's Arms tavern—that corner nearest to Bow church. The author had called upon him here, and finding his young friend engaged, took possession of a sofa, and commenced reading, from his then pocket-companion, Chaucer's "Flower and the Leaf." The fatigue of a long walk, however, prevailed over the fascination of the verses, and he fell asleep. Upon awaking, the book was still at his side; but the reader may conceive the author's delight, upon finding the following elegant sonnet written in his book at the close of the poem. During my sleep, Keats had read it for the first time; and, knowing that it would gratify me, had subjoined a testimony to its merit, that might have delighted Chaucer himself.

[1] Sunne sheen—the shining sun.

* From internal evidence, it appears that the poem of *The Flower and the Leaf* was originally written by a lady; for, the damsel in the arbour, whenever she is addressed by the poet, always replies to her with the epithet "Daughter dear." Mr. Godwin, in making this remark, adds, that "the poem has the air of a translation."

SONNET

UPON READING THE "FLOWER AND THE LEAF."

"This pleasant tale is like a little copse;
The honied lines so freshly interlace
To keep the reader in so sweet a place;
So that he here and there full-hearted stops,
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face:
And by the wand'ring melody may trace
Which way the tender legged linnet hops.

"Oh, what a charm hath white simplicity;
What mighty power hath this gentle story;—
I, that for ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.
February, 1817."

In addition, however, to the objection already urged against some of the writings of Chaucer, we must add, that several of his stories are in the detail so tedious and perseveringly uninteresting, that the charge brought against the *Paradise Lost* by Dr. Johnson, may be applied. and with some show of *justice* to them: indeed the reading of them through, so far from being a "duty," might almost be pronounced an active virtue,—a work of supererogation. Even in the "Troilus and Cressida," one of the most exciting of all his productions, there constantly intervene long see-saws of argumentative dialogue, that would "outlast a Lapland winter;" and, above all things in such a narrative, a discourse extending to upwards of a hundred lines upon the doctrine of *Predestination* is put into the mouth of Troilus! The same defect of tediousness applies to some of the other extended compositions. Moreover they are written in a false taste—at least, in a taste that modern fashion has rejected. "Chaucer's Dream," for instance, taken as an entire poem, is a tissue of idle and vapid romance. "The Parliament of Birds" is positively puerile; and even in the otherwise charming story of "Cambuscan and his Magic Horse," told by the young Squire, the second part, which is wholly occupied with the bewailings of a lovelorn Falcon, will scarcely find many readers,—still less admiring ones. His frequent and long-sustained devotions to the marguerite, or daisy, in which

lay couched somé hitherto uncomprehended allegory, present little chance of exciting or rewarding the investigating spirit of the analyst.

The extraordinary fidelity of Chaucer's portraits, and the careful minuteness with which he lays on tint after tint to heighten their effect, has already been insisted. This, in the main, is true; yet will he at times, with one dash of his pencil, (like a true genius,) give all the expression you can require. To take a few specimens at random, by way of example. The appearance of Troilus striding across the hall after his return from Cressida, when she was taken from him and delivered up to the Greeks :—

> "To Troy is come this woful Troilus,
> In sorrow, above all sorrow's smart,
> With *felon-look*, and with face despiteous;
> Then suddenly down from his horse he start,
> And thro' his palace, with a swollen heart,
> To chamber went."

The countenance of Cressida, when she has heard the news that she is to be separated from her lover :—

> "About her eyen two, *a purple ring*
> Bitrent,[1] in sothfast [2] tokening of her pain,
> That to behold it was a deadly thing."

The love-worn Arcite, who, from the weakness of his spirits, burst into tears if he "heard song or instrument about the house." Shakspeare himself could not have surpassed this for the intensity of its truth.

One of the impersonations described in the temple of Mars, is ;—

> "The *smiler* with the *knife under the cloak!*"

Another in the same,—

> "The coldé Death, with *mouth gaping upright.*"

Here is a fine portrait of one being led to execution ;—

> "Have you not seen sometime a palé face,
> Among a press,[3] of him that hath been led
> Towárd his death, where, as he gett'th no grace; [4]
> And such a colour in his face hath had,

---

[1] Bitrent—encircled. [2] Sothfast—real. [3] Press—crowd. [4] Grace —pardon.

Men mighten know him that was so bestead
Amongés all the faces in that rout—
So stands Custance, and looketh her about."

To take a humorous picture, yet no less vivid :—the Pardoner, describing himself preaching, says ;—

"Then pain I me to stretchen forth my neck,
And *east* and *west* upon the people I *beck*,
As doth a dove sitting upon a barn."

Here is the full length of a monk in one line :—

"Fat as a whale, and *walkéd as a swan.*"

Chanticleer, the herald of the dawn, is thus shortly, yet sufficiently described :—

"But when the cock, common astrologer,
'Gan on his breast to beat, and after crow."

It were an easy and a pleasant task too, to go on multiplying examples of this great poet's accurate eye in description; after that, as many more might be cited of his humour and keen satire; and a moderate volume would scarcely contain all the strokes of passion and tenderness with which his poems abound. The history of Troilus and Cressida alone, (the admiration of Sir Philip Sidney,) for profound feeling, would honour any poet that ever breathed. Every scene,—where the lovers themselves are concerned,—is redolent with sighs of "such sweet breath" as the following.

When the hour has arrived that Cressida is to depart for the Grecian camp to meet her father, she makes this dignified and consoling speech to her lover :—

"For trusteth[1] well, that your estate royal,
Nor vain delight, nor only worthiness
Of you in war, or tournay martial,
Nor pomp, array, nobley,[2] or eke richess
Ne maden me to rue on your distress;
But *moral virtue, grounded upon truth;*
That was the cause I first had on you ruth.[3]

"Eke, gentle heart, and manhood that ye had,
And that ye had, as me thought, *in despite*
Every thing that souned[4] *into bad,*

---

[1] Trusteth—trust (the imperative). [2] Nobley—nobility. [3] Ruth—pity. [4] Souned—inclined toward.

As rudéness, and *peoplish*[1] *appetite*,
And that *your reason bridled your delight*:
This made, aboven every créature,
That I was yours, and shall while I may dure."

And the following is the deportment of her lover after her departure. He is bewailing his fate during the hours of sleep :—

" 'Who seeth you now, my righté lodé-star?[2]
Who sitteth now, or stant[3] in your presence?
Who can comfórten now your hearté's war?
Now I am gone, whom give ye audience?
Who speaketh me right, now in absence?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care;
For well wot I, as ill as I ye fare.'

" And when he fell in any slumberings
Anon, begin he shouldé for to groan,
And dreamen of the dreadfullesté things
That mighté been, as, mete[4] he were alone
In place horríble, making aye his moan,
Or meten[4] that he was amongés all
His enemies, and in their handés fall.[5]

" And therewithal his body shouldé start,
And with the start all suddenly awake,
And such a tremour feel about his heart,
That of the fear his body shouldé quake,
And therewithal he should a noisé make,
And seem as though he shouldé fallen deep
From high aloft:—and then he wouldé weep."

Cressida has promised to return to him in a month :—

" And every night, as was his wont to do,
He stood, the bright moon shining to behold,
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,
And said—'Surely when thou art horned new,
I shall be glad—if ALL THE WORLD be true.'"

How beautiful the thought! to make his love the whole world, and the whole world to be absorbed in the one idea of his love. There are no more genuine and untainted creatures than Chaucer's lovers. They speak with hearts of primeval innocence: there is no worldly-mindedness,—no self-seeking in their actions. They have no thought but the all-engrossing one of loving unreservedly and adoringly.

[1] Peoplish—common, coarse. [2] Lode-star—north star (the guide of the mariner). [3] Stant—standeth. [4] Mete—dreamed. [5] Fall—fallen.

It is needless to say, that the above hasty references (single stones exhibited for samples of the complete magnificent structure) have not been addressed to the intimate acquaintance of Chaucer; they are quoted for the sole purpose of inducing the young and the tasteful, to whom his poems are as yet "a sealed book," to prepare themselves for many an hour of delight and wonder. The obsolete dialect may for a time be a stumbling-block to their progress;—but this overcome, great will be their reward.

Chaucer's Monument in Westminster Abbey.

The Arms of Chaucer.

CANTERBURY TALES.

"For out of th' oldé fieldés, as men saith,
Cometh all this new corn from year to year;
And out of oldé bookés, in good faith,
Cometh all this new science that men lere."

CHAUCER.

THE PROCESSION TO CANTERBURY.

"And forth we rode a little more than pace,
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas."—*Prol.* l. 822.

PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES.

WHENNÉ that April, with his showrés sote,[1]
The drouth of March hath piercéd to the rote,[2]
And bathéd every vein in such licóur,
Of which virtúe engendred is the flow'r;
When Zephirus eké, with his soté[1] breath, 5
Inspiréd hath in every holt[3] and heath
The tender croppés; and the youngé sun
Hath in the Ram his halfé course yrun,
And smallé fowlés maken melody,
That sleepen allé night with open eye, 10
So pricketh them natúre in their couráges,[4]
Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages,

[1] Sote—sweet. [2] Rote—root. [3] Holt—grove, forest. [4] Courages—hearts, spirits.

V. 8. *Hath in the Ram.*] Rather the *Bull*, for "the showers of April having pierced the drouth of March to the root," the sun must have passed through the sign of the Ram and entered that of the Bull.

And palmers for to seeken strangé strands,
To servé hallows[1] couth[2] in sundry lands;
And 'specially from every shiré's end 15
Of Engleland to Canterbury they wend,[3]
The holy blissful martyr for to seek
That them hath holpen when that they were sick.
Befell that in that season on a day,
In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay, 20
Ready to wenden[3] on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devout courage;
At night was come into that hostelry
Well nine-and-twenty in a company
Of sundry folk, by áventure yfall 25
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
That towárd Canterbury woulden ride.
The chambers and the stables weren wide,[4]
And well we weren easéd[5] atté best.
And shortly when the sun was gone to rest, 30
So had I spoken with them evereach one,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And madé foreword[6] early for to rise,
To take our way there as I you devise.
But nathéless[7] while I have time and space, 35
Or that I farther in this Talé pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reasón
To tellen you allé the condition
Of each of them, so as it seeméd me,
And which they weren, and of what degree, 40
And eke in what array that they were in;
And at a knight then will I first begin.
A *Knight* there was, and that a worthy man,
That from the timé that he first began
To riden out, he lovéd chivalry, 45
Truth and honóur, freedom and courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his lordés war,
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre.[8]
As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,
And ever honour'd for his worthiness. 50

[1] Hallows — holiness. [2] Couth — known. [3] Wend—go, make way. [4] Wide — spacious. [5] Eased atte best — commodiously lodged. [6] Foreword—promise. [7] Natheless—nevertheless. [8] Farre —farther.

V. 20. *Tabard.*] Since improperly called the *Talbot.* The Talbot was a hunting-dog, between a hound and a beagle. The *Tabard* was a "jacket, or sleeveless cŏat, worn in times past by noblemen in the wars, but now only by heralds, and is called their coat of arms in service."—*Speght.*

At Alisandre[1] he was when it was won :
Full often time he had the board begun
Aboven allé natións in Prusse:
In Lettowe[2] had he reysed,[3] and in Russe,
No Christian man so oft of his degree: 55
In Gernade at the siege eke had he be[4]
Of Algesir, and ridd'n in Belmarie:
At Leyés was he, and at Satalie,
When they were won ; and in the Greaté Sea[5]
At many a noble army had he be.[4] 60
At mortal battles had he been fifteen,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene
In listés thriés, and aye slain his foe.
This ilké[6] worthy Knight had been also
Sometimé with the Lord of Palathie 65
Against another heathen in Turkey,
And evermore he had a sovereign prise,[7]
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his porte as meek as is a maid.
He never yet no villainy[8] ne said 70
In all his life unto no manner wight:
He was a very perfect gentle knight.
But for to tellen you of his array;
His horse was good, but he ne was not gay.
Of fustián he wearéd a gipon[9] 75
Allé besmotter'd[10] with his habergeon,[11]
For he was late ycome from his viáge,[12]
And wenté for to done[13] his pilgrimage.
With him there was his son, a youngé *Squire*,
A lover and a lusty bachelor, 80
With lockés curl'd as they were laid in press;
Of twenty years of age he was I guess.

[1] Alisandre — Alexandria. [2] Lettowe — Lithuania. [3] Reysed, (from the German)—journeyed, ridden. [4] Be—been. [5] Greate Sea: Mr. Tyrwhitt infers that the Mediterranean is here implied. [6] Ilke —same. [7] Prise—praise. [8] Villainy—unworthy of a gentleman. [9] Gipon (*jupon*, Fr. *jupe*, Scotch)—a sort of short cassock. [10] Besmottered—soiled. [11] Habergeon—a small coat of mail. [12] Viage —travel. [13] Done—perform.

V. 52. *he had the board begun—in Prusse.*] He had been placed at the head of the table, the usual compliment to extraordinary merit, as the commentators very properly explain it. When our military men wanted employment, it was usual for them to go and serve in Prusse, or Prussia, with the knights of the Teutonic order, who were in a state of constant warfare with their heathen neighbours in Lettowe (Lithuania), Ruse (Russia), and elsewhere. A pagan king of Lettowe is mentioned by Walsingham, pp. 180, 343.—*Tyr.*

V. 57. *in Belmarie.*] I cannot find any country of this name in any authentic geographical writer. Froissart [V. iv. c. 23.] reckons it among the kingdoms of Africa.—*Tyr.*

Of his statúre he was of even length,
And wonderly deliver,[1] and great of strength;
And he had been some time in chevachie,[2] 85
In Flaunders, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him well, as of so little space,[3]
In hope to standen in his lady's grace.
Embroider'd was he, as it were a mead
All full of freshé flowrés white and red: 90
Singing he was or floyting[4] all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May:
Short was his gown, with sleevés long and wide;
Well could he sit on horse, and fairé ride:
He couldé songés make, and well endite, 95
Joust and eke dance, and well pourtray and write:
So hot he lovéd, that by nightertale[5]
He slept no more than doth the nightingale:
Courteous he was, lowly and serviceable,
And carv'd before his father at the table. 100
A *Yeoman* had he, and servánts no mo
At that time, for him lust[6] to ridé so,
And he was clad in coat and hood of green;
A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen
Under his belt he bare full thriftily:[7] 105
Well could he dress[8] his tackle yeomanly:
His arrows droopéd not with feathers low,
And in his hand he bare a mighty bow.
A not-head[9] had he with a brown viságe:
Of wood-craft coud[10] he well all the uságe: 110
Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,[11]
And by his side a sword and a buckler,
And on that other side a gay dagger,

[1] Wonderly deliver—wonderfully active: from the French *libre*, free. [2] Chevachie (French, *chevauchée*) — a military expedition. [3] Conducted himself well, considering the short time that he had served. [4] Floyting — fluting, playing on the flute, whistling.* [5] Nightertale—night-time. [6] Lust—pleased: it pleased him to ride so. [7] Thriftily — carefully. [8] Dress — apply. [9] Nott — shorn, cropped. Sax. *knot*. [10] Coud—knew, understood; the *part. past* of *conne*, to know. [11] Bracer—a defence for the archer's arm.

* The Squire would not, in all probability, have a flute always with him. I should therefore prefer the reading that he "*whistled* all the day;" as being a more natural touch of character, as well as in keeping with the hilarity of youth.

V. 85. *in chevachie.*] *Chevauchée*, French. It most properly means an expedition with a small party of cavalry, but is often used generally for any military expedition. Hollinshed calls it *a rode*.

V. 100. *And carv'd before his father.*] The practice of Squires (of the highest quality) carving at their fathers' tables has been fully illustrated by M. de Ste Palaye, *Ac. des Insc.* t. xx. p. 604.—*Tyr.*

Harnesséd well, and sharp as point of spear:
A Christopher on his breast of silver sheen.[1] 115
A horn he bare, the bauldrick[2] was of green:
A for'ster was he sothely[3] as I guess.
There was also a Nun, a *Prioress*;
That of her smiling was full simple and coy,
Her greatest oath n'as[4] but by Saint Eloy, 120
And she was clepéd[5] Madam Eglantine;
Full well she sangé the servíce divine,
Entunéd in her nose full sweetély;
And French she spake full fair and fetisly,[6]
After the school of Stratford atté Bow, 125
For French of Paris was to her unknow:[7]
At meaté was she well ytaught withal,
She let no morsel from her lippés fall,
Ne wet[8] her fingers in her saucé deep;
Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep, 130
That no drop ne fell upon her breast:
In courtesy was set full much her lest;[9]
Her over-lippé wipéd she so clean
That in her cuppé was no farthing[10] seen
Of greasé, when she dranken had her draught; 135
Full seemély after her meat she raught:[11]
And sikerly[12] she was of great disport,
And full pleasánt and amiable of porte,
And painéd her to contrefeiten cheer[13]
Of court, and be estately of mannére, 140
And to be holden digne[14] of reverence.
But for to speaken of her consciénce;
She was so charitable and so piteous,
She wouldé weep if that she saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled. 145
Of smallé houndés had she, that she fed
With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread,
But sore wept she if one of them were dead,

[1] Sheen—shining. [2] Bauldrick—a lace or belt, to suspend the horn over the shoulder. [3] Sothely—truly. [4] N'as (for ne was)—was not. [5] Cleped—called. [6] Fetisly—featly, neatly, properly. [7] Unknow—*part. past*, unknown. [8] Wet—wetted. [9] Lest—pleasure; that is, "her pleasure consisted in a courteous demeanour." [10] Farthing—any very small thing. [11] Raught—reached. [12] Sikerly—of a truth, certainly. [13] Cheer—countenance; that is, "she strove to assume a courtlike and stately countenance and manner." [14] Digne—worthy.

V. 115. *A Christopher.*] A silver image of St. Christopher. Louis of France wore leaden virgins in his cap.

V. 123. *Entuned in her nose.*] To the present day the style of delivering "the service divine," has undergone no farther change than the fashion of the nun's habit.

Or if men smote it with a yardé[1] smart :[2]
And all was consciénce and tender heart. 150
Full seemély her wimple[3] ypinchéd was,
Her nose tretíse,[4] her eyen grey as glass ;
Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red ;
But sikerly[5] she had a fair forehéad :
It was almost a spanné broad I trow ; 155
For hardily[6] she was not undergrow.[7]
Full fetise[8] was her cloak, as I was 'ware.
Of small corál about her arm she bare
A pair of beadés gauded[9] all with green,
And thereon hung a brooch of gold full sheen,[10] 160
On which was first ywritten a crownéd A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another *Nun* also with her had she,
That was her chappelléine, and *Priestés* three.
A *Monk* there was, a fair[11] for the mast'rý, 165
An out-rider,[12] that lovéd venery ;[13]
A manly man to been[14] an abbot able ;
Full many a dainty horse had he in stable,
And when he rode men might his bridle hear
Gingling in a whistling wind as clear 170
And eke as loud as doth the chapel bell,
There[15] as this lord was keeper of the cell.
The rulé of Saint Maure and of Saint Benc't,[16]
Because that it was old and somedeal strait,[17]
This ilké[18] monk let oldé thingés pace,[19] 175
And held after the newé world the trace.[20]
He gave not of the text a pulléd hen,
That saith, that hunters be not holy men,

[1] Yarde — staff, stick. [2] Smart — adv. smartly. [3] Wimple—kerchief for the neck. [4] Tretise—well shaped. [5] Sikerly—of a truth, certainly. [6] Hardily (Fr. *hardiment*) — boldly, certainly. [7] Undergrow—undergrown ; of short stature. [8] Fetise—neat, well made. [9] Gauded—trimmed, garnished. [10] Sheen—shining. [11] A fair—that is, "a fair one." [12] Out-rider—as we should say "a rider out-and-out." [13] Venery — hunting. [14] Been — to have been. [15] There—where. [16] Bene't—Benedict. [17] Strait—circumscribed, narrow. [18] Ilke—same. [19] Pace—move away. [20] Trace—path, track.

V. 169. *his bridle hear.*] It was formerly the fashion to hang bells to the horses' bridles. Spenser, in his *Faery Queen*, thus describes the caparison of a lady's steed :—

"Her wanton palfrey all was overspread
With tinsel trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose *bridle rung with golden bells* and bosses brave."
B. 1. *Canto* 2. *Stanza* 13.

V. 177. *a pulléd hen.*] I have been told that a hen whose feathers are pulled or plucked off, will not lay any eggs ; if that be true,

Nor that a monk when he is reckéless,
Is like to a fish that is waterless; 180
This is to say, a monk out of his cloister;
This ilké[1] text held he not worth an oyster;
And I say his opinión was good.
What! should he study 'nd make himselven wood,[2]
Upon a book in cloistr' alway to pore, 185
Or swinken[3] with his handés, and labóur,
As Austin bit?[4] how shall the world be servéd?
Let Austin have his swink[3] to him reservéd:
Therefore he was a prickasour[5] a-right,
Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight. 190
Of pricking[6] and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust,[7] for no cost would he spare.
I saw his sleevés purfiled[8] at the hand
With gris,[9] and that the finest of the land;
And, for to fasten his hood under his chin, 195
He had of gold ywrought a curious pin;
A love-knot in the greater end there was:
His head was bald, and shone as any glass,
And eke his face, as it had been anoint;
He was a lord full fat and in good point: 200
His eyen steep, and rolling in his head,
That steaméd as a furnace of a lead;
His bootés supple, his horse in great estate;
Now certainly he was a fair prelate:
He was not pale as a forepinéd[10] ghost; 205
A fat swan lov'd he best of any roast:
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.
A *Friar* there was, a wanton and a merry,
A limiter, a full solemné man:
In all the orders four is none that can[11] 210
So much of dalliance and fair languáge.
He had ymade full many a marriáge
Of youngé women at his owen cost;
Unto his order he was a noble post.

[1] Ilke—same. [2] Wood—crazy, mad. [3] Swinken—toil, drudge. [4] Bit—biddeth. [5] Prickasour—a hard rider. [6] Pricking—hard riding. [7] Lust—delight, gratification. [8] Purfiled—wrought at the edge. [9] Gris—a fur, and probably from the name, of a *grey* colour. [10] Forepined—wasted. [11] Can—knows.

(says Mr. Tyrwhitt) there is more force in the epithet than I had apprehended.

V. 187. *as Austin bit*] *i.e.* biddeth: Chaucer frequently abbreviates the third person singular of the present tense in this manner. So also, *rit* for *rideth*; *fint* for *findeth*; *rist* for *riseth*; *stant* for *standeth*; *sit* for *sitteth*; *smit* for *smiteth*.

V. 209. *A limiter.*] A friar licensed to beg within a certain district.

Full well belovéd and familiér was he 215
With franklins over all, in his countrée,
And eke with worthy women of the town,
For he had power of confessión,
As said himself, more than a curate,
For of his ord'r he was a licenciate. 220
Full sweetély heard he confessión,
And pleasant was his absolutión.
He was an easy man to give pennánce
There as he wist to have a good pittánce;
For unto a poor order for to give, 225
Is signé that a man is well yshrive;[1]
For if he gave, he dursté make avant
He wisté that a man was répentant;
For many a man so hard is of his heart
He may not weep although him soré smart; 230
Therefore instead of weeping and prayérs,
Men must give silver to the pooré friárs.
His tippet was ay farcéd[2] full of knives
And pins for to given fairé wives:
And certainly he had a merry note; 235
Well could he sing and playen on a rote.[3]
Of yeddings[4] he bare utterly the pris;[5]
His neck was whité as the fleur de lis:
Thereto he strong was as a champión,
And knew well the tavérns in every town, 240
And every hostéler and gay tapstére,
Better than a lazár[6] or a beggére;
For unto such a worthy man as he
Accordeth naught, as by his faculty
To haven with sike[7] lazars[6] acquaintance: 245
It is not honest, it may not advance,
As for to dealen with no such pouraille,[8]
But all with rich, and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, there as profit should arise
Courteous he was, and lowly of service: 250
There n'as[9] no man no where so virtuous;
He was the besté beggar in all his house,
And gave a certain fermé[10] for the grant
None of his brethéren came in his haunt:

[1] Yshrive—shriven, confessed. [2] Farced—stuffed. [3] Rote—a musical instrument, like the ancient psaltery. [4] Yeddings—supposed to be songs. [5] Pris—price; as we should say "bore away the bell." [6] Lazar—leper. [7] Sike—such. [8] Pouraille—offal. [9] N'as—was not. [10] Ferme—farm; that is, he farmed the grant.

V. 220. *he was a licentiate.*] One licensed by the pope to hear confessions.

For though a widow haddé but a shoe, 255
(So pleasant was his "*In principio*")
Yet would he have a farthing e'er he went;
His purchase was well better than his rent:
And rage he could as it had been a whelp;
In lovédays there could he muchel help; 260
For there was he not like a cloisterer,
With threadbare cape, as is a poor scholar,
But he was like a master or a pope:
Of double worsted was his semicope,[1]
That round was as a bell out of the press. 265
Somewhat he lispéd for his wantonness
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
And in his harping, when that he had sung,
His eyen twinkled in his head, aright
As do the starrés in a frosty night. 270
This worthy limiter was clep'd Hubérd.
A *Merchant* was there with a forkéd beard;
In motley, and high on horse he sat,
And on his head a Flaundrish beaver hat.
His bootés claspéd fair and fetisly;[2] 275
His reasons spake he full solemnély,
Sounding alway the increase of his winning:
He would the sea were kept,[3] for any thing,
Betwixen Middleburgh and Oréwell.
Well could he in exchanges shieldés[4] sell. 280
This worthy man full well his wit beset;[5]
There wisté no wight that he was in debt,
So steadfastly did he his governance[6]
With his bargains, and with his chevisance.[6]
Forsooth he was a worthy man withal, 285
But sooth to say I n'ot[7] how men him call.
A *Clerk* there was of Oxenford also,
That unto logic haddé long ygo.[8]
As leané was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat I undertake, 290

[1] Semicope—short cloak. [2] Fetisly—featly, neatly. [3] Kept—guarded. [4] Shields—French crowns, so called from their having a shield on the reverse. [5] Beset—employed. [6] Governance, chevisance:—the meaning of the passage is,—so steadily did he order his bargains and agreements in borrowing money. [7] N'ot—know not. [8] Ygo—*part. past*, gone.

V. 260. *In lovedays.*] A day appointed for the amicable settlement of differences was called a love-day.—*Bracton*, l. v. fol. 369.

V. 278. *the sea were kept.*] The old subsidy of tonnage and poundage was given to the king "pur la saufgarde et custodie del mer," 12 Edw. iv. c. 3.

But looked hollow, and thereto soberly.
Full threadbare was his overest courtepy;[1]
For he had gotten him yet no benefice,
Nor was naught worldly to have an office;
For him was lever[2] have at his bed's head 295
Twenty bookés clothéd in black or red
Of Aristotle and his philosophy,
Than robés rich, or fiddle or psaltry:
But all be that he was a philosópher
Yet haddé he but little gold in coffer, 300
But all that he might of his friendés hent,[3]
On bookés and on learning he it spent,
And busily 'gan for the soulés pray
Of them that gave him wherewith to scholay.[4]
Of study took he mosté cure and heed; 305
Not a word spake he moré than was need,
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short and quick, and full of high sentence:[5]
Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn and gladly teach. 310
A *Sergeant of the Law*, wary and wise,
That often had ybeen at the parvis,[6]
There was also full rich of excellence;
Discreet he was, and of great reverence;
He seeméd such, his wordés were so wise: 315
Justice he was full often in assise
By patent and by pleine[7] commission:
For his sciénce and for his high renown
Of fees and robés had he many one;
So great a purchaser was no where none: 320
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing might not been in suspect.[8]
No where so busy a man as he there n'as,[9]
And yet he seeméd busier than he was.
In termés had he case and domés[10] all 325
That from the time of King Will. weren fall;

[1] Overest courtepy—uppermost short cloak. [2] Lever—rather. [3] Hent—catch hold of. [4] Scholay—study. [5] High sentence—qy. lofty period. [6] Parvis—portico to a church. *See note below.* [7] Pleine—full. [8] Suspect—suspicion. [9] N'as—was not. [10] Case and domes:—I take the meaning of these two lines to be, that he was master of all the cases and opinions that had been given from the time of William the Conqueror.

V. 312. *at the parvis.*] Parvis—a church, or church-porch: applied to the mootings or law disputes among young students in the inns of court; and also to that disputation at Oxford, called *disputatio in parvisiis.*

Thereto he could indite and make a thing;
There couldé no wight pinch[1] at his writing;
And every statute could[2] he plein by rote.[3]
He rode but homely in a medley[4] coat, 330
Girt with a seint[5] of silk with barrés smale.[6]
Of his array tell I no longer tale.
A *Frankélin*[7] who was in this company;
White was his beard as is the daiésy:
Of his complexión he was sangúine; 335
Well lov'd he by the morrow a sop in wine:
To liven in delight was ever his won,[8]
For he was Epicurus' owén son,
That held opinión, that plein[9] delight
Was verily felicity parfite. 340
A householder, and that a great was he;
Saint Julian he was in his countrée.
His bread, his ale, was always after one;
A better envinéd[10] man was no where none.
Withouten bake meat never was his house 345
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous
It snowéd in his house of meat and drink
Of allé dainties that men could of think.
After the sundry seasons of the year,
So changéd he his meat and his soupére. 350
Full many a fat partridge had he 'n mew,[11]
And many a bream, and many a luce[12] in stew.
Woe was his cook but if his saucé were[13]
Poignant and sharp; and ready all his gear.[14]
His table dormant in his hall alway 355
Stood ready cover'd all the longé day.
At sessións there was he lord and sire;
Full often time he was knight of the shire.
An anlace[15] and a gipciere[16] all of silk
Hung at his girdle white as morrow milk. 360
A shirereve had he been and a countour;[17]
Was no where such a worthy vavasour.[18]

[1] Pinch—lay hold of, to find a flaw in his writing. [2] Could—knew. [3] Rote—by heart. [4] Medley—mixed colour. [5] Seint—cinct—girdle. [6] Smale—small. [7] Franklin—a substantial country gentleman and freeholder, proceeding next in rank to the knight and squire.—*Fortescue.* [8] Won—habit, custom. [9] Plein—full. [10] Envinéd—stored with wine. [11] In mew—in secret. [12] Luce—pike. [13] But if it were—that is, if it were not. [14] Gear—apparatus. [15] Anlace—knife or dagger. [16] Gipciere—purse. [17] Countour, qy. count-over,—county bailiff. [18] Vavasour—vassal; an old French law term, and means a feudal tenant of a tenant *in capite.*

V. 342. *Saint Julian*] was eminent for providing his votaries with good lodgings and accommodations of all sorts.—*Tyr.*

A *Haberdasher*, and a *Carpenter*,
A *Webbe*, a *Dyer*, and a *Tapiser*,
Were all yclothéd in one livery 365
Of a solémn' and great fraternity.
Full fresh and new their gear ypickéd[1] was;
Their knivés were ychapéd[2] not with brass;
But all with silver wrought full clean and well,
Their girdles and their pouches every deal:[3] 370
Well seeméd each of them a fair burgess
To sitten in a guild-hall on the dais:[4]
Evereach for the wisdom that he can,[5]
Was shapelich[6] for to be an alderman.
For cattle hadden they enough and rent, 375
And eke their wivés would it well assent;
And ellés certainly they were to blame:
It is full fair to be yclep'd[7] Madáme,
And for to go to vigils[8] all before,
And have a mantle réallich[9] ybore. 380
A *Coke* they hadden with hem for the nones,[10]
To boil the chickens and the marrow bones,
And poudre marchant,[11] tart and galingale.[12]
Well could he know a draught of London ale.
He couldé roast, and seethe, and broil, and fry, 385
Maken mortrewés,[13] and well bake a pie;
But great harm was it, as it thoughté me,
That on his shin a mormal[14] haddé he.

[1] Ypicked—spruce. [2] Ychaped—furnished, mounted. [3] Every deal—in every part. [4] Dais—the raised floor at the upper end of a banqueting hall. [5] Can—knew, was master of. [6] Shapelich—fit, calculated. [7] Yclep'd—called. [8] Vigil—the eve of a festival. [9] Reallich — royally. [10] Nones — occasion. [11] *See note below.* [12] Galingale—sweet cypress. [13] Mortrewes—*see note.* [14] Mormal—an ulcer, or cancer.

V. 381. *for the nones.*] "This phrase, which was very frequently, though not always very precisely, used by our old writers, I suppose to have been originally a corruption of corrupt Latin. From *pro nunc* I suppose came *for the nunc*, and so *for the nonce*, just as from *ad-nunc* came *a-non*. The Spanish *entonces* has been formed in the same manner from *in-tunc*."—*Tyr.*

V. 383. *And poudre marchant.*] What kind of ingredient this was I cannot tell. Cotgrave mentions a *pouldre blanche* and *pouldre de duc*, which seem both to have been used in cookery.

V. 386. *Maken mortrewes.*] Lord Bacon, in his *Nat. Hist.* i. speaks of "a mortress made with the brawn of capons stamped and strained." He joins it with the cullice (*coulis*) of cocks. It seems to have been a rich broth or soup, in the preparation of which flesh was stamped or beat in a mortar, from whence it probably derived its name, *une mortreuse*, though I cannot say that I ever met with the French word.—*Tyr.*

For blanc-manger that made he with the best.
A *Shipman* was there, wonéd[1] far by west; 390
For aught I wot, he was of Dartémouth:
He rode upon a rouncy[2] as he couth,[3]
All in a gown of falding[4] to the knee.
A dagger hanging by a lace had he
About his neck under his arm adown: 395
The hoté summer had made his hue all brown:
And certainly he was a good fellaw;
Full many a draught of wine he haddé draw
From Bourdeaux ward, while that the chapmen[5] sleep:
Of nicé consciénce took he no keep.[6] 400
If that he fought and had the higher hand,
By water he sent them home to every land.
But of his craft to reckon well his tides,
His streamés and his strandés him besides;
His harberow,[7] his moon, and his lodemanage,[8] 405
There was none such from Hull unto Carthage.
Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake;
With many a tempest had his beard been shake:[9]
He knew well all the havens, as they were
From Gothland to the Cape de Finistere; 410
And every creek in Bretagne and in Spain:
His barge yclepéd[10] was the Magdalen.
With us there was a *Doctor of Physic;*
In all this world ne was there none him like
To speak of physic and of surgery, 415
For he was grounded in astronomy.
He kept his patient a full great deal
In hourés by his magic naturel:
Well could he fortunen[11] the áscendant
Of his imáges for his patiént. 420
He knew the cause of every malady,
Were it of cold, or hot, or moist, or dry,

[1] Woned—lived. [2] Rouncy—a hack. [3] Couth—as he was able. [4] Falding—coarse cloth. [5] Chapmen—dealers. [6] Took no keep—took no account. [7] Harberow—harbourage. In this place Mr. Tyrwhitt thinks Chaucer uses it for the place of the sun. [8] Lodemanage — pilotage. [9] Shake — shaken. [10] Ycleped — called. [11] Fortunen—make fortunate.

V. 389. *For blanc manger.*] This seems to have been a very different dish in the time of Chaucer from that which is now called by the same name. There is a receipt for making it in MS. *Harl.* n. 4016: one of the ingredients is the brawne of a capon teased small.—*Gloss.*

V. 402. *home to every land.*] I incline to think that the meaning of this passage is, that our shipman, not being a man of "nice conscience," sent his prisoners "home by water,"—in other words, drowned them.

And where engendered, and of what humóur :
He was a very perfect practiser.
The cause yknow[1] and of his harm the root, 425
Anon he gave to the sick man his boot.[2]
Full ready had he his apothecaries
To send him druggés and his lectuaries;
For each of them made other for to win :
Their friendship n'as not newé to begin. 430
Well knew he the old Esculapius,
And Dioscorides and eke Rufus,
Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien,
Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen,
Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin, 435
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
Of his diet measurable was he,
For it was of no superfluity,
But of great nourishing, and digestible.
His study was but little on the Bible. 440
In sanguine and in perse[3] he clad was, all
Linéd with taffat' and with sendall.[4]
And yet he was but easy of dispence;
He kept that he won in the pestilence;
For gold in physic is a cordiál, 445
Therefore he lovéd gold in speciál.
A good *Wife* was there *of* besidé *Bath*,
But she was some deal deaf, and that was scathe.[5]
Of cloth-making she haddé such a haunt[6]
She passéd them of Ypres and of Ghent. 450
In all the parish, wife ne was there none
That to the oft 'ring before her shouldé gone,
And if there did, certain so wroth was she,
That she was out of allé charity.
Her coverchiefs weren full fine of ground; 455
I dursté swear they weigheden a pound,
That on the Sunday were upon her head :
Her hosen weren of fine scarlet red,
Full strait ytied, and shoes full moist[7] and new :
Bold was her face, and fair and red of hew. 460
She was a worthy woman all her live;
Husbands at the church door had she had five,

[1] Yknow—*part. past*, known. [2] Boot—help, remedy. [3] Sanguine and perse—red and blue. [4] Sendall—thin silk. [5] Scathe—harm, damage. [6] Haunt—custom. [7] Moist—fresh.

V. 459. *Moist and new.*] Moist is here used in a peculiar sense, as derived from *musteus*; for according to Nonius, 2, 518, "Mustum non solum vinum, verum etiam novellum quicquid est, recte dicitur." So in *Manciple's Prol.* l. 59, moisty ale is opposed to old.—*Tyr.*

Withouten other company in youth,
But thereof needeth not to speak as nouth ;[1]
And thrice had she been at Jerusalem ; 465
She haddé pass'd many a strangé stream :
At Rome she haddé been, and at Bologne,
In Galice at Saint James, and at Cologne :
She couldé[2] much of wand'ring by the way;
Gat-tooth'd[3] was she, soothly[4] for to say : 470
Upon an ambler easily she sat,
Ywimpled[5] well, and on her head a hat
As broad as is a buckler or a targe;
A soté mantle 'bout her hippés large,
And on her feet a pair of spurrés sharp. 475
In fellowship well could she laugh and carp.[6]
Of remedies of love she knew perchance,
For of that art she could[2] the oldé dance.
A good man there was of religión,
That was a pooré *Parson* of a town, 480
But rich he was of holy thought and work;
He was also a learned man, a Clerk,
That Christés gospel truly wouldé preach ;
His parishens[7] devoutly would he teach ;
Benign he was, and wonder diligent, 485
And in adversity full patiént,
And such he was yprovéd often sithés ;[8]
Full loath were him to cursen for his tithés ;
But rather would he given out of doubt
Unto his pooré parishens about 490
Of his off'ring, and eke of his súbstance ;
He could in little thing have suffisance :[9]
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne left naught for no rain nor thunder,
In sickness and in mischief, to visit 495
The farthest in his parish much and lite[10]
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff :
This noble 'nsample to his sheep he yaf,[11]
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught,
Out of the gospel he the wordés caught, 500
And this figúre he added yet thereto,
That if gold rusté what should iron do?
For if a priest be foul on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewéd[12] man to rust ;

[1] Nouth — now. [2] Couldé — knew. [3] Gat-toothed — probably cat-tooth'd ; *Gatto* being the Italian for cat. [4] Soothly—truly. [5] Ywimpled—covered on the neck. [6] Carp—talk, prattle, jest, and banter. [7] Parishens—parishioners. [8] Sithes—times. [9] Suffisance—sufficiency. [10] Much and lite—great and small. [11] Yaf—gave. [12] Lewed—ignorant.

And shame it is, if that a priest take keep 505
To see a 'fouléd' shepherd and clean sheep :
Well ought a priest ensample for to give
By his cleanness how his sheep should live.
He setté not his benefice to hire,
And let his sheep accumbred [1] in the mire, 510
And ran unto Londón unto St. Poule's
To seeken him a chantery [2] for souls,
Or with a brotherhood to be withold ; [3]
But dwelt at home and kepté well his fold,
So that the wolf ne made it not miscarry : 515
He was a shepherd and no mercenary;
And though he holy were, and virtuous,
He was to sinful men not dispítous,[4]
Ne of his speeché dangerous [5] ne digne ; [6]
But in his teaching díscreet and benign. 520
To drawen folk to heaven with fairéness,
By good ensample, was his business ;
But it were [7] any person obstinate,
What so he were of high or low estate,
Him would he snibben [8] sharply for the nonés : [9] 525
A better priest I trow that no where none is.
He waited after no pomp or reverence,
Ne makéd him no spicéd consciénce ;
But Christés lore,[10] and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselve. 530
With him there was a *Plowman*, was his brother,
That had ylaid of dung full many a fother ;[11]
A trué swinker[12] and a good was he,
Living in peace and perfect charity :
God loved he besté with all his heart 535
At allé times, were it gain or smart,[13]
And then his neighébour right as himselve.
He wouldé thresh, and thereto dike and delve,[14]
For Christés sake, for every pooré wight
Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.[15] 540

[1] Accumbred—encumbered. [2] Chantery—*see note.* [3] Withold—withholden, withheld. [4] Dispitous—pitiless, inexorable, angry to excess. [5] Dangerous—sparing. [6] Digne—proud, disdainful. [7] But it were—should it happen that any one were, &c. [8] Snibben—rebuke. [9] For the nones—for the occasion. [10] Lore—learning, doctrine. [11] Fother—a cart load, an indefinite quantity. [12] Swinker—labourer. [13] Were it gain, &c.—whether for gain or pain. [14] Dike and delve—make ditches and dig. [15] Might—power.

V. 512. *chantery for souls.*] An endowment for the payment of a priest to sing mass agreeably to the appointment of the founder. There were thirty-five of these chantries established at St. Paul's, which were served by fifty-four priests.—*Dugdale, Hist. pref.* p. 41.

His tithés payéd he full fair and well
Both of his proper swink[1] and his cattle.
In a tabard he rode upon a mare.
There was also a Reve, and a Miller,
A Sompnour, and a Pardoner also, 545
A Manciple, and myself; there n'ere no mo.[2]
The *Miller* was a stout carl[3] for the nones,[4]
Full big he was of brawn, and eke of bones,
That provéd well, for over all there he came,
At wrestling he would bear away the ram. 550
He was short shouldered, broad, a thické gnarre,[5]
Ther n'as no door that he n'olde heave off bar,
Or break it at a running with his head;
His beard as any sow or fox was red,
And thereto broad as though it were a spade. 555
Upon the cop[6] right of his nose he had
A wert, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs
Red as the bristles of a sowés ears:
His nosé-thirlés[7] blacké were and wide:
A sword and buckler bare he by his side: 560
His mouth as widé was as a furnáce:
He was a jangler and a Goliardeis,[8]
And that was most of sin and harlotries:
Well could he stealen corn and tollen thrice;[9]
And yet he had a thumb of gold pardie, 565
A white coat and a blue hood wearéd he:

[1] Swink — labour. [2] N'ere no mo—there were not any more. [3] Carl—churl, a hardy country fellow. [4] For the nones—for the occasion. [5] Gnarre—knot; meaning, that he was like the thick knot in a tree. [6] Cop—top. [7] Nose-thirles—nostrils; *thirl*, means a hole or passage. [8] Goliardeis—galliard, reveller. [9] Tollen thrice —take tale three times.

V. 543. *In a tabard.*] See note on tabard, v. 20. Chaucer has dressed his ploughman in a tabard, evidently to convey the notion that it was a cast-off dress that had been given to him.

V. 544. REVE—a steward, or bailiff. SOMPNOUR—an officer employed to summon persons to appear in an ecclesiastical court; now called an apparitor. PARDONER—a seller of pardons or indulgences from the pope. MANCIPLE—an officer who has the care of purchasing victuals for an inn of court. The name is probably derived from the Latin, *manceps*, which signified particularly the superintendent of a public bakehouse, and from thence a baker in general. See *Du Cange* in v. *Manceps*, 2. The office still exists in several colleges and inns of court.

V. 550. *the ram.*] This was the usual prize at wrestling-matches. M. Paris mentions a wrestling-match at Westminster in the year 1222, at which a ram was the prize, p. 265.—*Tyr.*

V. 565. *a thumb of gold.*] If the allusion be, as is most probable, to the old proverb, "Every honest miller has a thumb of

A baggépipe well could he blow and soun,
And therewithall he brought us out of town.
A gentle *Manciple* was there of a temple,
Of which achatours[1] mighten take ensample
For to be wise in buying of vitaille,
For whether that he paid or took by taille[2]
Algate[3] he waited so in his achate[4]
That he was aye before in good estate:
Now is not that of God a full fair grace[5]
That such a lewéd[6] mannés wit shall pace[7]
The wisdom of a heap of learned men?
Of masters had he more than thriés ten
That were of law expert and curious,
Of which there was a dozen in that house
Worthy to been stewardés of rent and land
Of any lord that is in Engleland,
To maken him live by his proper good
In honour debtéless, but if he were wood,[8]
Or live as scarcely as him list desire,
And able for to helpen all a shire
In any case that mighté fallen or hap;
And yet this Manciple set their aller cap.[9]
The *Revé* was a slender choleric man,
His beard was shorn as nigh as ever he can:
His hair was by his earés round yshorn;
His top was dockéd like a priest beforne:
Full longé were his leggés and full lean,
Ylike a staff; there was no calf yseen:
Well could he keep a garner and a bin:
There was no auditor could on him win:[10]
Well wist[11] he by the drought and by the rain
The yielding of his seed and of his grain.
His lordés sheep, his neat,[12] and his dairy,
His swine, his horse, his store, and his poultry

[1] Achatours (Fr. *acheteurs*)—caterers, buyers. [2] Tail "took by taille,")—that is, "went upon credit." [3] Algate-[4] Achate—purchase. [5] Grace—grant, favour, gift. [6] ignorant. [7] Pace—pass, excel. [8] But if he were wood—were mad, or a fool. [9] Aller cap—outwitted them all. *below*. [10] On him win—gain upon him. [11] Wist—knew. [1] neat-cattle.

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gold," this passage may mean that our miller, notwithsta-thefts, was an honest miller, *i. e.* as honest as his brethren

V. 588. *set their aller cap.*] Aller is the genitive plu from the Saxon, *ealra*. Their aller would be properly re Latin, *eorum omnium*. To set a man's cap is the same a fool of him.—*Tyr.*

Were holly [1] in this Revés governing,
And by his covenant gave he reckoning,
Since that his lord was twenty years of age;
There could no man bring him in aréarage.
There n'as bailiff, ne herd,[2] ne other hine,[3] 605
That he ne knew his sleight[4] and his covine;[5]
They were a-dread of him as of the death.
He wonning[6] was full fair upon a heath;
With greené trees yshadow'd was his place;
He couldé better than his lord purcháce: 610
Full rich he was ystoréd privily:
His lord well could he pleasen subtilly
To give and lend him of his owen good,
And have a thank and yet a coat and hood.
In youth he learned had a good mistére;[7] 615
He was a well good wright,[8] a carpenter.
This Revé sat upon a right good stot,[9]
That was all pomely-grey,[10] and highté[11] Scot:
A long surcoat[12] of perse[13] upon he had,
And by his side he bare a rusty blade. 620
Of Norfolk was this Reve of which I tell,
Beside a town men clepen[14] Baldéswell.
Tucked he was, as is a frere[15] about,
And ever he rode the hinderest of the rout.
A *Sompnour* was there with us in that place 625
That had a fire-red cherubinnés face,
For sauséfleme[16] he was, with eyén narrow;

* * * *

[1] Holly—wholly, entirely. *See note.* [2] Herd—keeper. [3] Hine—hind, husbandman. [4] Sleight—cunning, skill, contrivance. [5] Covine—secret management. [6] Wonning—dwelling. [7] Mistere—mystery, trade. [8] Wright—workman. [9] Stot—*see note below.* [10] Pomely-grey—dapple-grey. *See note.* [11] Hight—called. [12] Surcoat—upper coat. [13] Perse—bluish grey. [14] Clepen—call. [15] Frere—friar. [16] Sausefleme—*see note below.*

V. 601. *holly.*] In Froissart we constantly meet with the expression—"The English archers shot so *holly* together."

V. 617. *a right good stot.*] I take *stot* to be put here for *stod*, the Saxon word for a stallion. A stot signified properly a bullock, as it still does in the north.—*Tyr.*

V. 618. *pomely.*] From the French, *pomme;* being dotted with round spots, like apples: Pommelée gris—appled, or dappled grey.

V. 627. *sausefleme.*] I find this word in an old French book of physic;—"Oignement magistrel pur sausefleme et pur chescune manere de roigne."—Roigne signifies any scorbutic eruption. So in the *Thousand Notable Things*, b. i. 70, "A sawsfleame or red pimpled face is helped with this medicine following."—Two of the ingredients are quicksilver and brimstone.—*Tyr.*

With scalléd[1] browés black and pilléd[2] beard ;
Of his viságe children were sore afeard.
There n'as[3] quicksilver, litarge, ne brimstone, 6
Boras, ceruse, ne oil of tartar none,
Ne ointément, that wouldé cleanse or bite,
That him might helpen of his whelkés[4] white,
Ne of the knobbés sitting on his cheeks :
Well lov'd he garlick, onións, and leeks, 6
And for to drink strong wine as red as blood ;
Then would he speak and cry as he were wood ;[5]
And when that he well drunken had the wine,
Then would he speaken no word but Latín :
A fewé termés could[6] he, two or three, 6
That he had learnéd out of some decree ;
No wonder is,—he heard it all the day :
And eke ye knowen well, how that a jay
Can clepen[7] "Wat!" as well as can the pope :
But who so would in other thing him grope,[8] 6
Then had he spent all his philosophy ;
Aye *Questio quid juris?* would he cry.
He was a gentle harlot and a kind ;
A better fellow should a man not find :

* * * *

Full privily a finch eke could he pull ;[9] 6
And if he found o[10] where a good fellaw
He wouldé teachen him to have non awe
In such a case of th' archédeacon's curse,
But if[11] a mannés soul were in his purse ;
For in his purse he should ypunish'd be ; 6
"Purse is the archédeacon's hell," said he :
But well I wot he liéd right in deed ;
Of cursing ought each guilty man him drede,
For curse will slay right as assoiling[12] saveth,
And also 'ware him of a *significavit*. 6

[1] Scalled—scurfy. [2] Pilled—bald, scanty, (from the Fr. *pill* robbed, plucked). [3] N'as—was not. [4] Whelkes—pustul [5] Wood—mad. [6] Could—knew. [7] Clepen—call. [8] Grope—sear [9] Pull a finch—to defraud any one; answering to the modern ca term, "to pigeon." [10] O—one, any. [11] But if—except. [12] Assoili —absolving.

V. 647. *Questio quid juris?*] This kind of question occurs f quently in Ralph de Hengham. After having stated a case adds, *Quid juris?* and then proceeds to give the answer to it. S *Heng. Mag.* c. xi.; "Esto autem quod reus nullo modo venerit hunc diem, *quid juris?*" &c. See also c. 12.—*Tyr.*

V. 648. *a gentle harlot.*] Harlot is hireling, and formerly me a *hired* servant of either sex. It is easy to trace the application the term as it became shifted to a disreputable class of the co munity.

V. 660. *a significavit.*] The writ *de excommunicato capie*

In danger had he at his owen guise[1]
The youngé girlés of the diocese,
And knew their counsel and was of their rede.[2]
A garland had he set upon his head
As great as it were for an aléstake ;[3] 665
A buckler had he made him of a cake.
With him there rode a gentle *Pardoner*
Of Ronceval, his friend and his compeer,
That straight was comen from the court of Romé.
Full loud he sang "Come hither lové to me." 670
This Sompnour bare to him a stiff burdoun,[4]
Was never tromp of half so great a soun.
This Pardoner had hair as yellow 's wax,
But smooth it hung as doth a strike of flax;
By ounces hung his lockés that he had, 675
And therewith he his shoulders overspread :
Full thin it lay, by culpons[5] on and on,
But hood for jollity ne wore he none,
For it was trusséd up in his wallét.
Him thought he rode all of the newé get,[6] 680
Dishevele, save his cap, he rode all bare :
Such glaring eyen had he as a hare :
A vernicle[7] had he sewéd upon his cap;
His wallet lay before him in his lap

[1] Guise—manner, style. *See note below* to "danger." [2] Rede—synonymous with counsel. [3] Alestake—stake, or sign at an alehouse. [4] Burdoun—a humming noise, a bass. [5] Culpons—shreds. [6] Get—fashion. [7] Vernicle—*see note below.*

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commonly called a *significavit*, from the beginning of the writ, which is as follows;—"Rex Vicecomiti L. salutem. Significavit nobis venerabilis pater H. L. Episcopus," &c.—*Cod. Jur. Ecc.* p. 1054.—*Tyr.*

V. 661. *In danger had he*] *i. e.* within the reach or control of his office.—*The young girls*, in the next line, may signify either the young men or the young women, as girl was formerly an appellation common to both sexes.—*Tyr.*

V. 670. *love to me.*] The double rhyme of *to me* answering to *Rome*, proves evidently that Rome in this place is to be pronounced as a dissyllable; we need therefore have no scruple, I think, of pronouncing it in the same manner wherever the metre requires two syllables. See *Man of Law's Tale*, 136, 150, 948, 1128.—A like use may be made of other similar rhymes in Chaucer for establishing the pronunciation of the *e* feminine. In *Can. Yeom. Tale*, l. 649, *by me* rhymes to *time*, and in *Troil.* ii. 985, to *time* and *prime*; and accordingly both time and prime are used in other places as dissyllables. See *Clerk's Prol.* l. 8; *Squire's Tale*, l. 383; *Pardoner's Tale*, l. 368.—In these cases the final monosyllable *me* transfers its accent to the preceding syllable, after the manner of the Greek enclíticks, and the final *e* of course becomes a mere *e* feminine.—*Tyr.*

V. 683. *A vernicle had he.*] A diminutive of Veronike, Fr.; a

Bret-full[1] of pardon come from Rome all hot: 685
A voice he had as small as hath a goat:
No beard had he, ne never none should have;
As smooth it was as it were newé shave:
* * * *
But of his craft, from Berwick unto Ware
Ne was there such an other Pardoner, 690
For in his mail he had a pillowbere[2]
Which, as he saidé, was our Lady's veil:
He said he had a gobbet[3] of the seal
That Saint Peter had, when that he went
Upon the sea till Jesu Christ him hent:[4] 695
He had a cross of laton[5] full of stones,
And in a glass he haddé piggés bones.
But with these relics whenné that he found
A pooré parson dwelling up on lond,
Upon a day he gat him more money 700
Than that the parson gat in moneths tway;
And thus with feignéd flattering and japes,[6]
He made the parson and the peopl' his apes.
But truély to tellen atté last,
He was in church a nobl' ecclesiast: 705
Well could he read a lesson or a story,
But alderbest[7] he sang an offertory;[8]
For well he wisté[9] when that song was sung
He musté preach and well affile[10] his tongue
To winné silver, as he right well could, 710
Therefore he sang the merrier and loud.
Now have I told you shortly in a clause
Th' estate, th' array, the numb'r, and eke the cause,
Why that assembled was this company
In Southwark at this gentle hostelry 715
That hight the Tabard, fasté by the Bell.
But now is timé to you for to tell

[1] Bret-full—probably answering to our term, "brim-full." [2] Pillowbere—pillowcase, or covering. [3] Gobbet—a piece. [4] Hent—held, took hold of. [5] Laton—a mixed metal resembling brass: the brass-workers call their brass for patterns *latten*. [6] Japes—cheats, jests. [7] Alderbest—the best of all. [8] Offertory—part of the mass, sung during the consecration of the host. [9] Wiste—was aware. [10] Affile—rub up, file, polish.

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copy in miniature of the picture of Christ, which is supposed to have been miraculously imprinted upon a handkerchief preserved in the church of St. Peter at Rome. It was usual for persons returning from pilgrimages, to bring with them certain tokens of the several places which they had visited; and therefore the Pardoner, who is just arrived from Rome, is represented with a vernicle sewed upon his cap.—*Gloss.*

How that we barén us that ilké[1] night,
When we were in that hostelry alight;
And after will I tell of our viáge,[2] 720
And all the remnant of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray you of your courtesy
That ye n' arrette[3] it not my villainy[4]
Though that I plainly speak in this mattére,
To tellen you their wordés and their cheer,[5] 725
Ne though I speak their wordés properly;
For this ye knowen all so well as I,
Who so shall tell a Tale after a man
He must rehearse as nigh as ever he can
Everich word, if it be in his charge, 730
All speak he ne'er so rudely and so large,
Or ellés he must tellen his Tale untrue,
Or feignen thingés, or finden wordés new:
He may not spare although he were his brother;
He must as well say one word as an other. 735
Christ spake himself full broad in holy writ,
And well ye wote no villainy is it:
Eke Plato sayeth, who so can him read,
The wordés must be cousin[6] to the deed.
Also I pray you to forgive it me, 740
All[7] have I not set folk in their degree
Here in this Tale, as that they shoulden stand:
My wit is short ye may well understand.
Great cheeré made our Host us every one,
And to the supper set he us anon, 745
And servéd us with victual of the best;
Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest.[8]
A seemly[9] man our Hosté was with all
For to have been a marshall in a hall;
A largé man he was, with eyen steep; 750
A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap:
Bold of his speech, and wise, and well ytaught,
And of manhóod ylackéd right him naught:
Eke thereto was he right a merry man,
And after supper plaién[10] he began, 755
And spake of mirth amongés other things
When that we hadden made our reckonings,
And saidé thus; "Now Lordings truély
Ye be to me welcóme right heartily,
For by my truth, if that I shall not lie, 760
I saw not this year such a company

[1] Ilke—same. [2] Viage—journey. [3] Arrette—charge, impute. [4] Villainy—rudeness. [5] Cheer—deportment. [6] Cousin—relate, bear upon. [7] All—for although. [8] Lest—liked, pleased. [9] Seemly—comely. [10] Plaien—plainly.

At onés in this herb'row[1] as is now;
Fain would I do you mirth, and I wist how;
And of a mirth I am right now bethought
To do you ease,[2] and it shall cost you naught. 765
Ye go to Canterbury; God you speed,
The blissful martyr quité you your meed;[3]
And well I wot as ye go by the way,
Ye shapen you to talken and to play;
For truély comfórt ne mirth is none 770
To riden by the way dumb as the stone;
And therefore would I maken you dispórt,
As I said erst, and do you some comfórt.
And if you liketh all by one assent
Now for to standen at my judgément, 775
And for to worken as I shall you say
To-morrow, when ye riden on the way;
Now by my father's soulé that is dead,
But ye be merry[4] smiteth[5] off my head:
Hold up your hands withouten moré speech." 780
Our consel was not longé for to seche;[6]
Us thought it was not worth to make it wise,[7]
And granted him withouten more avise,[8]
And bad him say his verdict as him lest.[9]
"Lordings, (quod[10] he) now hearkeneth for the best;
But take it not, I pray you, in disdain: 786
This is the point, to speak it plat and plain,
That each of you to shorten with your way
In this viáge[11] shall tellen Talés tway,
To Canterbury ward I mean it so, 790
And homeward he shall tellen other two,
Of áventures that whilom[12] have befall.
And which of you that bear'th him best of all,
That is to say, that telleth in this case
Talés of best senténce and most solace,[13] 795
Shall have a supper at your aller[14] cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
When that ye come again from Canterbury.
And, for to maken you the moré merry,
I will my selven gladly with you ride, 800
Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide.

[1] Herberow—harbour, lodging. [2] Do you ease—content you. [3] Quite you your meed—requite you your reward. [4] But ye be merry—if ye be not merry. [5] The termination, *eth*, was the second person of the imperative mood. [6] Seche—seek. [7] To make it wise—to make it a matter of wisdom. [8] Avise—premeditation. [9] Lest—pleased. [10] Quod—quothed. [11] Viage—journey. [12] Whilom—formerly. [13] Solace—amusement, mirth, comfort. [14] Aller—of the whole.

And who that will my judgément withsay,[1]
Shall pay for all we spenden by the way.
And if ye vouchésafe that it be so,
Tell me anon withouten wordés mo, 805
And I will early shapen me therefore."
This thing was granted, and our oathés swore
With full glad heart, and prayden him also
That he would vouchésafe for to do so,
And that he wouldé be our governor, 810
And of our Talés judge and réporter,
And set a supper at a certain price,
And we would ruled be at his device
In high and low: and thus by one assent
We been accorded to his judgément; 815
And thereupon the wine was set anon:
We drunken, and to resté went each one
Withouten any longer tarrying.
A-morrow when the day began to spring
Up rose our Host, and was our aller cock,[2] 820
And gathered us together in a flock,
And forth we rid'n a little more than pace,[3]
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas;
And there our Host began his horse arest,
And saidé; "Lordés, hearkeneth if you lest: 825
Ye weet your foreword,[4] and I it record
If even-song and morrow-song accord,
Let see now who shall tell the firsté Tale:
As ever may I drinken wine or ale
Who so is rebel to my judgément 830
Shall pay for all that by the way is spent.
Now draweth[5] cut[6] e'er that ye farther twinne;[7]
He which that hath the shortest shall begin.
"Sir Knight, (quod he) my master and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is mine accord. 835
Cometh near (quod he) my Lady Prioress,
And ye sir Clerk; let be your shamefastness,

[1] Withsay—gainsay, contradict. [2] Aller cock—chanticleer to us all. [3] Pace—a foot-pace. [4] Foreword—word given before, promise. [5] Draweth—second person imp. mood. [6] Cut—lot; *see note.* [7] Twinne—proceed.

V. 807. *and our oathes swore*] *i. e.* and *we* swore our oathes,—and praied him, &c. It is too frequent a practice with our author to omit the governing pronoun before his verbs. So also, and saw—for, and they saw; and sayn—for, and they sayn; and yet lith—for, and yet he lith; and blamed himself—for, and he blamed himself; and made him—for, and I made him.

V. 832. *draweth cut.*] The ceremony of "drawing cut," or lot, is called by Froissart "tirer à la longue paille."

Ne studieth naught : lay hand to every man."
  Anon to drawen every wight began,
And shortly for tellen as it was, 840
Were it by áventure, or sort,[1] or case,[2]
The sooth is this, the cut fell on the Knight,
Of which full blithe and glad was every wight ;
And tell he must his Talé as was reason,
By foreword[3] and by compositión, 845
As ye have heard ; what needeth wordés mo ?
And when this good man saw that it was so,
As he that wise was and obediént
To keep his foreword by his free assent,
He said ; " Sithen[4] I shall begin this game, 850
What, welcome be the cut a Goddés name.
Now let us ride, and hearkeneth what I say."
  And with that word we riden forth our way ;
And he began with a right merry cheer
His Tale anon, and said as ye shall hear. 855

[1] Sort—lot. [2] Case—chance. [3] Foreword—promise. [4] Sithen—since.

Tabard Inn.

"The queen anon for very womanhead
'Gan for to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
* * * * *
And allé crieden bothé less and more,
Have mercy, Lord!"—l. 890.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

WHILOM,[1] as oldé stories tellen us,
There was a duke that highté[2] Theseus;
Of Athens he was lord and governor,
And in his timé such a conqueror,
That greater was there none under the sun; 5
Full many a riché countrey had he won.
What with his wisdom and his chivalry
He conquer'd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was yclepéd[3] Scythia,
And wedded the freshé queen Hypolita, 10
And brought her home with him to his countrey
With muchel glory 'and great solempnitee,

[1] Whilom—formerly. [2] Hight—was called. [3] Ycleped—named, called.

V. 8. *the regne of Feminie.*] The kingdom of the Amazons. So Penthesilea is called by Gower the Queen of Feminee, *Conf. Amat.* fol. 75, a. 97, b.

And eke her youngé sister Emily.
And thus with victory' and with melody
Let I this worthy duke to Athens ride, 15
And all his host in armés him beside.
And certés, if it n'ere too long to hear,
I would have told you fully the mannére
How wonnen was the regne of Feminie
By Theseus and by his chivalry, 20
And of the greaté battle for the nonés[1]
Betwixt Athenés and th' Amasonés,
And how assiegéd was Hypolita,
The fairé hardy queen of Scythia,
And of the festé that was at her wedding, 25
And of the temple at her home comíng;
But all this thing I must as now forbear:
I have, God wot, a largé field to ear,[2]
And weaké been the oxen in my plough:
The remnant of my Tale is long enow. 30
I will not letten[3] eke none of this rout;
Let every fellow tell his Tale about,
And let see now who shall the supper win.
There as I left I will again begin.
This duke, of whom I madé mentioún, 35
When he was comen almost to the town,
In all his weal, and in his mosté pride,
He was 'ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Where that there kneeléd in the highé way
A company of ladies tway and tway, 40
Each after other, clad in clothés black;
But such a cry and such a woe they make,
That in this world n'is creáture livíng
That ever heard such another waiménting;[4]
And of this cry ne would they never stenten[5] 45
Till they the reinés of his bridle henten.[6]
"What folk be ye that at mine home coming
Perturben so my festé[7] with crying?
Quod Theséus; have ye so great envie
Of mine honoúr, that thus complain and cry? 50
Or who hath you misboden[8] or offended?
Do tellé me, if that it may be amended,
And why ye be thus clothed all in black?"
The oldest lady of them all then spake,
When she had swoonéd with a deadly cheer,[9] 55
That it was ruthé for to see and hear.

[1] For the nones — upon the occasion. [2] Ear — till, plough. [3] Letten—hinder, obstruct. [4] Waimenting—lamentation. [5] Stenten —ceased. [6] Henten—laid hold of. [7] Feste—festival. [8] Misboden —harmed. [9] Cheer—countenance.

She saidé; "Lord, to whom Fortúne hath given
Victóry, 'and as a conqueror to liven,
Naught grieveth us your glory 'and your honóur,
But we beseeké[1] you of mercy and succóur: 60
Have mercy on our woe and our distress:
Some drop of pity through thy gentleness
Upon us wretched women let now fall;
For certés, Lord, there n'is none of us all
That she n' hath been a duchess or a queen; 65
Now be we caitives,[2] as it is well seen:
Thankéd be Fortune and her falsé wheel
That none estate ensureth to be wele.
And certés, Lord, to abiden your presence,
Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence 70
We have been waiting all this fourténight:
Now help us, Lord, sin it li'th in thy might.
"I wretched wight, that weep and wailé thus,
Was whilom wife to King Capaneus
That starf[3] at Thebés, curséd be that day; 75
And allé we that been in this array,
And maken all this lamentatión,
We losten all our husbands at that town,
While that the siegé thereabouten lay:
And yet now th' oldé Creon, well-away! 80
That lord is now of Thebés the city,
Fulfill'd of ire and of iniquity,
He for despite, and for his tyranny,
To done the dead bodiés a villainy,
Of all our lordés, which that been yslaw,[4] 85
Hath all the bodies on a heap ydraw,[5]
And will not suffren them by none assent
Neither to be yburied ne ybrent,[6]
But maketh houndés eat them in despite."
And with that word, withouten more respite, 90
They fallen groff,[7] and crien piteously,
"Have on us wretched women some mercy,
And let our sorrow sinken in thine heart."
This gentle duke down from his courser start[8]
With hearté piteous when he heard them speak; 95
Him thoughté that his heart would all to-break,[9]
When he saw them so piteous and so mate,[10]
That whilom weren of so great estate,
And in his armés he them all up hent,[11]
And them comfórted in full good intent, 100

[1] Beseeke — beseech. [2] Caitives — wretches. [3] Starf — died. [4] Yslaw—slain. [5] Ydraw—drawn. [6] Ybrent — burned. [7] Groff, (Saxon word) — flat on the ground: hence comes to *grovel*. [8] Started. [9] To-break — an augmentative of the verb, break. [10] Mate, (from the Span. *matar*)—cast down. [11] Hent—held.

And swore his oath, as he was trué knight,
He wouldé do so farforthly his might
Upon the tyrant Creon them to wreak,
That all the people of Greecé shouldé speak
How Creon was of Theseus yserved, 105
As he that hath his death full well deserved.
And right anon, withouten more abode,
His banner he display'd, and forth he rode
To Thebés ward, and all his host beside:
No ner[1] Athenés n'olde he go ne ride, 110
Ne take his easé fully half a day,
But onward on his way that night he lay,
And sent anon Hypolita the queen,
And Emily her youngé sister shene,[2]
Unto the town of Athenes for to dwell; 115
And forth he rit;[3] there n'is no more to tell.
The red statúe of Mars, with spear and targe,
So shineth in his whité banner large,
That all the fieldés glitteren up and down;
And by his banner borne is his penon 120
Of gold full rich, in which there was ybeat[4]
The Minotaur which that he slew in Crete.
Thus rit[3] this duke, thus rit this conqueror,
And in his host of chivalry the flower
Till that he came to Thebés, and alight 125
Fair in a field, there as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speaken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebés king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plain batáille, and put his folk to flight; 130
And by assault he won the city after,
And rent adown both wall, and spar,[5] and rafter,
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their husbands that were slain,
To do th' obséquies, as was then the guise. 135
But it were all too long for to devise
The greaté clamour and the waímenting[6]
Which that the ladies made at the brennínng[7]
Of the bodies, and the great honóur
That Theseus, the noble conqueror, 140
Doth to the ladies when they from him went;
But shortly for to tell is mine intent.

[1] Ner—nearer. [2] Shene—shining. [3] Rit—rideth. [4] Ybeat—*see note below.* [5] Spar — beam. [6] Waimenting (*woe-menting,*) — lamentation. [7] Brenning—burning.

V. 121. *ybeat.*] Probably stamped, that operation being anciently, I suppose, performed by the hammer.—*Tyr.*

When that this worthy duke, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slain, and wonnen Thebés thus,
Still in the field he took all night his rest, 145
And did with all the country as him lest:[1]
To ransack in the tas[2] of bodies dead,
Them for to strip of harness and of weed,[3]
The pillers[4] did their business and cure,[5]
After the battle and discomfiture; 150
And so befell that in the tas[2] they found,
Through girt with many a grievous bloody wound,
Two youngé knightés ligging[6] by and by,[7]
Both in one armés[8] wrought full richély;
Of whiché two Arcita hight that one, 155
And he that other highté Palamon.
Not fully quick[9] ne fully dead they were,
But by their cote-armúre and by their gear
The heralds knew them well in speciál,
As those that weren of the blood réal[10] 160
Of Thebés, and of sistren two yborn.
Out of the tas[2] the pillers[11] han them torn,
And han them carried soft unto the tent
Of Theseus, and he full soon them sent
To Athenes, for to dwellen in prisón 165
Perpetual, he n'oldé[12] no ransón.
And when this worthy duke had thus ydone
He took his host, and home he rit[13] anon,
With laurel crownéd as a conqueror,
And there he liveth in joy and in honóur 170
Term of his life; what needeth wordés mo?
And in a tow'r, in anguish and in woe,
Dwellen this Palamon and eke Arcite
For evermore, there may no gold them quit.[14]
Thus passeth year by year, and day by day, 175
Till it fell onés in a morrow of May
That Emily, that fairer was to seen
Than is the lily, upon his stalké green,
And fresher than the May with flourés new,
(For with the rosé-colour strove her hue; 180
I n'ot which was the finer of them two)
Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and all ready dight;[15]
For May will have no sluggardy a-night;

[1] Lest — pleased. [2] Tas—pile. [3] Weed — dress. [4] Pillers — strippers; the *pilleurs*—peelers, strippers went about to see who were dead, and to rescue the wounded to *cure* them. To *cure* meant anciently to dress a wound. [5] Cure—care. [6] Ligging—lying. [7] By and by—side-by-side. [8] Armes—armour; one armes—armour of the same fashion. [9] Quick — alive. [10] Real—royal. [11] Pillers—plunderers. [12] N'olde—would not have. [13] Rit—rideth. [14] Quit—acquit. [15] Dight—dressed.

The season pricketh[1] every gentle heart,
And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
And sayth, "Arise, and do thine óbservance."[2]
This maketh Emily have rémembrance
To do honóur to May, and for to rise:
Yclothéd was she fresh for to devise.
Her yellow hair was broided in a tress
Behind her back, a yardé long I guess;
And in the garden at the sun uprist[3]
She walketh up and down where as her list:[4]
She gathereth flourés, party white and red,
To make a sotel[5] garland for her head;
And as an angel heavenly she sung.
The greaté tower that was so thick and strong,
Which of the castle was the chief dungeón,
(Where as these knightés weren in prisón,
Of which I toldé you, and tellen shall)
Was even joinant to the garden wall,
There as this Emily had her playíng.
Bright was the sun and clear that morrowning,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his won,[6] by leave of his gaoler
Was risen, and roaméd in a chambr' on high,
In which he all the noble city sigh,[7]
And eke the garden, full of branches green,
There as this fresh Emelia the sheen[8]
Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.
This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon,
Go'th in his chamber roaming to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his woe:
That he was born full oft he said Alas!
And so befell, by áventure or case,[9]
That through a window thick of many a bar
Of iron grate, and square as any spar,[10]
He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
And therewithal he blent[11] and criéd Ah!
As though he stungen were unto the heart:
And with that cry Arcit' anon up start,

[1] Pricketh—urgeth, exciteth. [2] Observance—respect. [3] U
—uprising. [4] List—chose. [5] Sotel—subtle, well contrivec
fancied. [6] Won—habit, custom. [7] Sigh—saw. [8] Sheen—shi
[9] Case—chance. [10] Spar—beam. [11] Blent—started. *See note b*

V. 220. *he blent.* This word has various senses in Chauc
it is derived from blinnan, *to cease;* blindan, *to blind;* or bler
to mingle. It seems here to be used in a fourth sense, the sa
which Shakspeare uses the verb to blench, *i.e.* to shrink or
aside. *Johnson's Dict.* in v. *Blench.* See *Gloss.* in v. *Blent,* 1
of *Blench.*—*Tyr.*

And saidé; "Cousin mine, what aileth thee
That art so pale and deadly for to see?
Why criedst thou? who hath thee done offence? 225
For Goddés love take all in patiénce
Our prison, for it may none other be;
Fortune hath given us this adversity:
Some wicke[1] aspéct or dispositión
Of Saturn, by some constellatión, 230
Hath given us this, although we had it sworn;
So stood the heaven when that we were born:
We must endure; this is the short and plain."
This Palamon answér'd, and said again,
"Cousin, forsooth of this opinión 235
Thou hast a vain imaginatión:
This prison causéd me not for to cry,
But I was hurt right now throughout mine eye
Into mine heart, that would my bané be;
The fairness of a lady that I see 240
Yond in the garden roaming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my woe:
I n'ot whe'r[2] she be woman or goddéss,
But Venus is it sothly[3] as I guess."
And therewithal on knees adown he fell, 245
And saydé; "Venus, if it be your will
You in this garden thus to transfigúre,
Before me sorrowful wretched creáture,
Out of this prison help that we may 'scape;
And if so be our destiny be shape[4] 250
By eterné word to dien in prisón,
Of our lineage havé some compassión,
That is so low ybrought by tyranny."
And with that word Arcita 'gan espy
Where as this lady roamed to and fro, 255
And with that sight her beauty hurt him so,
That if that Palamon were wounded sore
Arcit' is hurt as much as he or more:
And with a sigh he saydé pitéously;
"The freshé beauty slay'th me suddenly 260
Of her that roameth in the yonder place;
And, but I have[5] her mercy and her grace,[6]
That I may see her at the leasté way,
I n'am but dead; there n'is no more to say."
This Palamon, when he these wordés heard, 265
Dispiteously[7] he lookéd, and answérd,

[1] Wicke—wicked, adverse. [2] N'ot whe'r—know not whether. [3] Sothly—truly. [4] Shape—shapen, ordered. [5] But I have—unless I have. [6] Grace—favour, approbation. [7] Dispiteously—fiercely.

"Whe'r sayést thou this in earnest or in play?"
"Nay, quod Arcit', in earnest by my fay;[1]
God help me so, me lust full evil, play."[2]
This Palamon 'gan knit his browés tway. 270
"It were, quod he, to thee no great honóur
For to be false, ne for to be traytóur
To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother
Ysworn full deep, and each of us to other,
That never for to dién in the pain,[3] 275
Till that the death departen shall us twain,
Neither of us in love to hinder other,
Ne in none other case,[4] my levé[5] brother;
But that thou shouldest truly farther me
In every case as I should farther thee. 280
This was thine oath, and mine also, certáin;
I wot it well, thou dar'st it not withsain:
Thus art thou of my counsel out of doubt,
And now thou wouldést falsely been about
To love my lady, whom I love and serve, 285
And ever shall till that mine hearté starve.[6]
"Now certés, false Arcite, thou shalt not so:
I lov'd her first, and toldé thee my woe
As to my counsel, and my brother sworn
To farther me as I have told beforn, 290
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or ellés art thou false I dare well say'n."
This Arcita full proudly spake again.
"Thou shalt, quod he, be rather false than I, 295
And thou art false, I tell thee utterly;
For *par amour* I lov'd her first e'er thou.
What wilt thou say? thou wistest not right now
Whether she were a woman or a goddess:
Thine is affectión of holiness, 300
And mine is love as to a creáture,
For which I toldé thee mine áventure,
As to my cousin and my brother sworn.
"I posé[7] that thou lovedest her beforn:
Wot'st[8] thou not well the oldé clerké's saw,[9] 305
That who shall give a lover any law?
Love is a greater lawé by my pan[10]
Than may be given of any earthly man;
And therefore positive law and such decree
Is brok'n all day for love in each degree. 310

[1] Fay—faith. [2] Lust full evil, play—ill inclined to play. [3] For to dien in the pain—although to suffer death in the penalty. [4] Case—chance, event. [5] Leve—dear. [6] Starve—die. [7] Pose—suppose, take for granted. [8] Wot'st—wottest, knowest. [9] Saw—maxim. [10] Pan—head.

A man must needés love maugre [1] his head ;
He may not flee it, though he should be dead,
All be she maid, or widow, or ellés wife.
"And eke it is not likely all thy life
To standen in her grace,[2] no more shall I ; 315
For well thou wot'st [3] thy selven verily
That thou and I be damnéd [4] to prisón
Perpetual ; us gaineth no ransón.
"We strive as did the houndés for the bone,
They fought all day, and yet their part was none: 320
There came a kite, while that they were so wroth,
And bare away the bone betwixt them both.
And therefore at the kingés court, my brother,
Each man for himself, there is none other.[4]
Love if thee lust, [5] for I love, and aye shall ; 325
And sothly, levé [6] brother, this is all.
Here in this prison musten we endure,
And everich of us take his áventure."
Great was the strife, and long betwixt them tway,
If that I haddé leisure for to say : 330
But to th' effect. It happened on a day,
(To tell it you as shortly as I may) [7]
A worthy duke that highté Perithous
That fellow [8] was to this duke Theseus
Since thilké [9] day that they were children lite,[10] 335
Was come to Athenés his fellow to vísit,
And for to play as he was wont to do ;
For in this world he lovéd no man so,
For he lov'd him as tenderly again :
So well they lov'd, as oldé bookés sain, 340
That when that one was dead, sothly [11] to tell,
His fellow went and sought him down in hell :
But of that story list me not to write.
Duke Perithous lovéd well Arcite,

[1] Maugre—malgré, in spite of. [2] Grace—favour, approbation. [3] Wot'st—wottest, knowest. [4] Damned — condemned. [4] None other—nothing else to be done. [5] Lust—desire, wish, choose. [6] Leve—dear. [7] May — can, am able. [8] Fellow — companion. [9] Thilke—that. [10] Lite—small. [11] Sothly—truly.

V. 333. *Perithous.*] The last syllable of this proper name should be pronounced as a monosyllable ; like our word, *house.*

V. 343. *not to write.*] The poet has overlooked the circumstance that his knight is *telling*, not *writing* the story. This tale was translated by Chaucer from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio, and published some years before the undertaking of the Canterbury Tales, and as he himself says in the *Legend of Good Women*, "was known little." Mr. Godwin is therefore of opinion that, in its present form, we "possess only an abridgement of what was once a more ample and extended work."—*Life*, vol. ii. 8vo, p. 73.

And had him known at Thebés year by year : 345
And finally, at réquest and praiére
Of Perithous, withouten any ranson,
Duke Theseus him let out of prisón,
Freely to go where that him list ov'r all,
In such a guise as I you tellen shall. 350
This was the foreword,[1] plainly for t' endite,
Betwixen Theseus and him Arcite;
That if so were that Arcite were yfound
Ever in his life, by day or night, one stound[2]
In any country of this Theseus, 355
And he were caught, it was accorded[3] thus,
That with a sword he shouldé lose his head ;
There was none other remedy ne rede ;[4]
But taketh his leave, and homeward he him sped:
Let him beware, his necké lieth to wed.[5] 360
How great a sorrow suffereth now Arcite?
The death he feeleth through his hearté smite ;
He weepeth, waileth, crieth piteously;
To slay himself he waiteth privily.
He said; "Alas the day that I was born! 365
Now is my prisón worse than beforn;
Now is me shape[6] eternally to dwell
Not only' in purgatory but in hell.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous,
For ellés had I dwelt with Theseus, 370
Yfettered in his prison evermo;
Then had I been in bliss and not in woe:
Only the sight of her whom that I serve,
Though that I never her gracé[7] may deserve,
Would have sufficéd right enough for me. 375
"O dearé cousin Palamon, quod he,
Thine is the victóry' of this áventure;
Full blissful in prisón mayst thou endure:
In prisón? certés nay, but in paradise.
Well hath Fortúne yturned thee the dice, 380
That hast the sight of her, and I th' absénce.
For possibl' is, since thou hast her présence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by some case,[8] since Fortune is changeáble,
Thou mayst to thy desire sometime attain: 385
But that I am éxiléd, and barrén
Of allé grace,[7] and in so great despair,
That there n'is earthé, water, fire, ne air,

[1] Foreword—agreement, promise. [2] One stound—one moment. [3] Accorded—agreed. [4] Rede—counsel, debating. [5] Wed—pawn, or pledge. [6] Shape—shapen, contrived, arranged. [7] Grace—favour. [8] Case—chance, fortune.

Ne creáture that of them makéd is,
That may me heal or do comfórt in this, 390
Well ought[1] I starve[2] in wanhope[3] and distress.
Farewell my life, my lust,[4] and my gladness.
"Alas! why plainen men so in commúne
Of purveyance[5] of God or of Fortúne,
That giveth them full oft in many a guise 395
Well better than they can themselves devise?
Some man desireth for to have richéss,
That cause is of his murd'r, or great sicknéss;
And some man would out of his prison fain,[6]
That in his house is of his menie[7] slain. 400
Infinite harmés been in this mattére:
We wot not what thing that we praién here.
We faren as he that drunk is as a mouse:
A drunken man wot well he hath a house,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider, 405
And to a drunken man the way is slider,[8]
And certés in this world so faren we.
"We seeken fast after felicity,
But we go wrong full often truély.
Thus we may sayén all, and namely I, 410
That ween'd,[9] and had a great opinión,
That if I might escapen from prisón
Then I had been in joy and perfect hele,[10]
There now I am exiléd from my wele.[11]
Since that I may not see you Emily 415
I n'am but dead; there n'is no remedy."
Upon that other sidé Palamon,
When that he wist Arcita was agone,
Such sorrow he maketh, that the greaté tower
Resouned of his yelling and clamóur. 420
The puré fetters[12] on his shinnés great
Were of his bitter salté tearés wet.
"Alas! quod he, Arcita, cousin mine,
Of all our strife, God wot, the fruit is thine.
Thou walkest now in Thebés at thy large,[13] 425
And of my woe thou givest little charge.
Thou mayst, sith thou hast wisdom and manhead,
Assemblen all the folk of our kindred,
And make a war so sharp on this countrée,
That by some áventure or some treatée 430

[1] Ought I—behoveth me. [2] Starve—die. [3] Wanhope—despair. [4] Lust—desire. [5] Purveyance—ordination. [6] Would out of prison fain—would gladly be out of prison. [7] Menie—attendants. [8] Slider—treacherous, slippery. [9] Ween'd—thought. [10] Hele—health. [11] Wele—wealth, prosperity. [12] Pure fetters—the very fetters. [13] Thy large—thy liberty.

Thou mayst have her to lady and to wife
For whom that I must needés lose my life.
For as by way of possibility,
Sith thou art at thy large,[1] of prison free,
And art a lord, great is thine ávantage, 435
More than is mine, that starve[2] here in a cage:
For I may weep and wail while that I live,
With all the woe that prison may me give,
And eke with pain that love me giv'th also,
That doubleth all my torment and my woe." 440
Therewith the fire of jealousy up start
Within his breast, and hent[3] him by the heart
So woodly,[4] that he like was to behold
The box-tree, or the ashes dead and cold.
Then said he; "O cruel Goddés! that govérn 445
This world with binding of your word etern,
And writen in the table of adamant,
Your parlement[5] and your eterné grant,
What is mankind more unto you yhold
Than is the sheep that rouketh[6] in the fold? 450
For slain is man right as another beast,
And dwelleth eke in prison and arrest,
And hath sicknéss and great adversity,
And often timés guiltéless pardié.
"What governance is in this prescience 455
That guiltéless tormenteth innocence?
And yet increaseth this all my penánce,
That man is bounden to his óbservance
For Goddés sake to letten of his will,
There as a beast may all his lust[7] fulfill. 460
And when a beast is dead he hath no pain;
But man after his death must weep and plain,
Though in this world he havé care and woe:
Withouten doubt it mayé standen so.
"The answer of this, let I to divinés, 465
But well I wot that in this world great pine is.
Alas! I see a serpent or a thief,
That many a trué man hath done mischiéf,
Go at his large, and where him lust may turn.
But I must be in prison through Satúrn, 470
And eke through Juno, jealous and eke wood,[8]
That hath well nigh destroyéd all the blood
Of Thebés, with his wasté wallés wide.
And Venus slayeth me on that other side

[1] Thy large—thy liberty. [2] Starve—die. [3] Hent—held, seized. [4] Woodly—madly. [5] Parlement—consultation. [6] Rouketh—crowd, huddle together. [7] Lust—inclination. [8] Wood—furious.

For jealousy and fear of him Arcite." 475
  Now will I stent[1] of Palamon a lite,[2]
And letten him in his prisón still dwell,
And of Arcita forth I will you tell.
  The summer passeth, and the nightés long
Encreaséd double-wise the painés strong 480
Both of the lover' and of the prisoner;
I n'ot[3] which hath the wofuller mistére.[4]
For shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetually is damnéd to prisón,
In chainés and in fetters to be dead; 485
And Arcite is exiléd on his head[5]
For evermore, as out of that countrée,
Ne never more he shall his lady see.
  You lovers axe I now this questión,
Who hath the worse, Arcite' or Palamon? 490
That one may see his lady day by day,
But in prisón must he dwellén alway:
That other where him lust[6] may ride or go,
But see his lady shall he never mo.
Now deemeth as you listé, ye that can, 495
For I will tell you forth as I began.
  When that Arcite to Thebés comen was,
Full oft a day he swelt[7] and said, Alas!—
For see his lady shall he never mo.
And shortly to concluden, all his woe, 500
So muchel sorrow 'had never creáture
That is or shall be while the world may dure.
His sleep, his meat, his drink, is him beraft,
That lean he wax'd, and dry as is a shaft.
His eyen hollow, and grisly to behold, 505
His hué sallow, and pale as ashes cold,
And solitary' he was, and ever' alone,
And wailing all the night, making his moan:
And if he heardé song or instrument,
Then would he weep; he mighté not be stent.[8] 510
So feeble were his spirits, and so low,
And changéd so, that no man couldé know
His speeché ne his voice, though men it heard.
And in his gear, for all the world he far'd
Not only like the lover's malady 515
Of Ereos, but rather ylike mánie,
Engendred of humóurs melánchólic,
Before his head in his cell fántastic.

[1] Stent—cease, pause. [2] Lite—little. [3] N'ot—*i. e.* ne wot, know not. [4] Mistere - condition. [5] On his head—on pain of his head. [6] Lust—chooses. [7] Swelt—fainted. [8] Stent—stopped.

V. 518. *Before his head in his cell.*] This is the reading of *MS E.*

And shortly turnéd was all up so down
Both habit and eke dispositión 520
Of him, this woful lover Dan[1] Arcite :
What should I all day of his woe endite?
When he enduréd had a year or two
This cruel torment, and this pain and woe,
At Thebés, in his country, as I said, 525
Upon a night in sleep as he him laid,
Him thought how that the wingéd god Mercúry
Before him stood, and bade him to be merry.
His sleepy yard[2] in hand he bare upright;
A hat he wearéd upon his hairés bright : 530
Arrayéd was this god (as he took keep)[3]
As he was when that Argus took his sleep,
And said him thus; "To Athenes shalt thou wend;
There is the shapen[4] of thy woe an end."
And with that word Arcite' awoke and start.[5] 535
"Now truély how sore that ever me smart,
Quod he, to Athenes right, now will I fare;
Ne for no dread of death shall I not spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In her presénce I recké not to starve.[6] 540
And with that word he caught a great mirróur,
And saw that changéd was all his colóur,
And saw his visage all in another kind;
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That since his face was so disfiguréd 545
Of malady the which he had enduréd,
He mighté well, if that he bare him low,
Live in Athenés evermore unknow,[7]
And see his lady well nigh day by day.
And right anon he changéd his array, 550
And clad him as a pooré labourer.
And all alone, save only a squiér,
That knew his privity and all his case,[8]
Which was disguiséd poorly as he was,
To Athenes is he gone the nexté way. 555
And to the court he went upon a day,

[1] Dan—*see note below.* [2] Yard—rod or wand: "sleepy yard"—that is, his "sleep-compelling yard." [3] Keep—notice, attention. [4] Shapen—prepared. [5] Start—*part. pa.* started. [6] Starve—die. [7] Unknow—for unknown. [8] Case—fortune.

The *MSS. C.* i, and *HA.* read, beforn his *owen* celle—and perhaps their authority ought to have been followed in the text.—*Tyr.*

V. 521. *Dan Arcite.*] Dan was an abbreviation of *dominus*, and used as a title of respect; most commonly, however, when the priesthood were alluded to, or addressed.

And at the gate he profferéd his servíce,
To drudge and draw what so men would devise.
And shortly of this matter for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain, 560
The which that dwelling was with Emily,
For he was wise, and couldé soon espy
Of every servant which that servéd her :
Well could he hewén wood, and water bear,
For he was young and mighty for the nones,[1] 565
And thereto he was strong and big of bones
To do that any wight can him devise.
A year or two he was in this servíce,
Page of the chamber' of Emily the bright,
And Philostráte' he saidé that he hight. 570
But half so well belov'd a man as he
Ne was there nev'r in court of his degree.
He was so gentle of conditión,
That throughout all the court was his renown.
They saiden that it were a charity 575
That Theseus would enhancen his degree,
And putten him in worshipful servíce,
There as he might his virtues exercise.
And thus within a while his name is sprung
Both of his deedés and of his good tongue, 580
That Theseus hath taken him so near,
That of his chamber' he made him a squiér,
And gave him gold to maíntain his degree ;
And eke men brought him out of his countrée
From year to year full privily his rent ; 585
But honestly and slily he it spent,
That no man wonder'd how that he it had.
And three year in this wise his life he ladd,
And bare him so in peace and eke in war
There n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.[2] 590
And in this blissé let I now Arcite,
And speak I will of Palamon a lite.[3]
In darkness, and horríble and strong prisón
This seven year hath sitten Palamon,
Forpinéd,[4] what for love and for distress. 595
Who feeleth double sorrow' and heaviness
But Palamon ? that love distraineth so,
That wood[5] out of his wit he go'th for woe,
And eke thereto he is a prisoner
Perpetual, not only for a year. 600
Who couldé rhyme in English properly
His martyrdom ? forsooth it am not I,

[1] Nones—purpose, occasion. [2] Derre—more dearly. [3] Lite—little. [4] Forpined—wasted. [5] Wood—raving.

Therefore I pass as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh year, in May
The thriddé[1] night, (as oldé bookés sayn, 6
That all this story tellen moré plain)
Were it by áventure or destiny,
(As when a thing is shapen[2] it shall be)
That soon after the midnight Palamon,
By helping of a friend, brake his prisón, 6
And fleeth the city fast as he may go,
For he had given drink his jailor so
Of a clary[3] made of a certain wine,
With nárcotics and opie[4] of Thebés fine,
That all the night though that men would him shak
The jailor slept, he mighté not awake : 6
And thus he fleeth as fast as ever he may.
The night was short, and fasté by the day,
That needés cast[5] he must himselven hide;
And to a grové fasté there beside 6
With dreadful[6] foot then stalketh Palamon :
For shortly this was his opinión,
That in that grove he would him hide all day,
And in the night then would he take his way
To Thebés ward, his friendés for to pray, 6
On Theseús to helpen him warríe :[7]
And shortly, either he would lose his life
Or winnen Emily unto his wife.
This is the effect, and his intenté plain.
Now will I turnen to Arcite' again, 6
That little wist how nighé was his care,
Till that Fortúne had brought him in the snare.
The busy lark, the messenger of day,
Saluéth in her song the morrow grey.
And fiery Phœbus riseth up so bright, 6
That all the orient laugheth of the sight,
And with his streamés drieth in the greves[8]
The silver droppés hanging on the leaves.

[1] Thridde—third. [2] Shapen—fashioned, ordained. [3] Clary mixture of honey, spices, &c. *See note.* [4] Opie—opium. [5] Neec cast—*i. e.* he must needs cast, or contrive. [6] Dreadful—alarm [7] Warrie — to make war; hence the modern word "worr [8] Greves—groves.

V. 613. *Of a clary.*] Wine mixed with honey and spices, a afterwards strained till it is clear. It was otherwise called pime "Clary wine" is an indigenous compound, still known in rem and primitive country villages. I remember, when a child, drinki it upon festive occasions; and I also have an impression of bei shown a garden herb, called by the same name, with which wine was flavoured. The wine was of the palest primrose colo and was both luscious and highly spiced.

And Arcite, that is in the court real[1]
With Theseus the squiér principal, 640
Is risen, and looketh on the merry day;
And for to do his óbservance to May,
Remembring on the point[2] of his desire,
He on his courser, starting as the fire,
Is ridden to the fieldés him to play, 645
Out of the court, were it a mile or tway;
And to the grove of which that I you told
By áventure his way he 'gan to hold,
To maken him a garland of the greves,[3]
Were it of woodbind or of hawthorn leaves, 650
And loud he sang against the sunné shene.[4]
"Mayé, with all thy flowrés and thy green,
Right welcome be thou fairé freshé May,
I hope that I some green here getten may."
And from his courser with a lusty[5] heart 655
Into the grove full hastily he start,
And in a path he roamed up and down,
There as by áventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him see,
For sore affearéd of his death was he, 660
Nothing ne knew he, that it was Arcite;
God wot he would have trowed it full lite.[6]
But soth[7] is said, gone sithen[8] are many years,
That field hath eyen, and the wood hath ears.
It is full fair a man to bear him even,[9] 665
For all day meeten men at unset steven.[10]
Full little wot Arcite of his fellaw,
That was so nigh to hearken of his saw,[11]
For in the bush he sitteth now full still.
When that Arcite' had roamed all his fill, 670
And sungen all the roundel lustily,
Into a study he fell suddenly,
As do these lovers in their quainté gears,[12]
Now in the crop,[13] and now down in the breres,[14]
Now up, now down, as bucket in a well. 675
Right as the Friday, sothly[7] for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast;
Right so can gery[15] Venus overcast
The heartés of her folk, right as her day
Is gerfull,[16] right so changeth she array. 680

[1] Real—royal. [2] Point—object. [3] Greves—groves. [4] Shene—shining. [5] Lusty—pleased, joyous. [6] Lite—little. [7] Soth—true. [8] Sithen—since. [9] Even—equably. [10] Unset steven—without set time, or appointment. [11] Saw—speech. [12] Quainte gears—strange modes or fashions. [13] Crop—top. [14] Breres—briars. [15] Gery—changeful, qy. from the Fr. *girer*, to turn round. [16] Gerfull—changeful.

Seld' is the Friday all the week ylike.
When Arcite' had ysung, he gan to sike,[1]
And set him down withouten any more;
"Alas! (quod he) the day that I was bore!
How longé, Juno, through thy cruelty 685
Wilt thou warrién Thebés the city?
Alas! ybrought is to confusión
The blood réal[2] of Cadmé and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firsté man
That Thebés built, or first the town began, 690
And of the city first was crownéd king,
Of his lin'age am I, and his offspring
By very line, as of the stock réal;[3]
And now I am so caitiff[3] and so thrall,[4]
That he that is my mortal enemy 695
I serve him as his squiér poorély.
And yet doth Juno me well moré shame,
For I dare not beknow mine owén name,
But there as I was wont to hight Arcite,
Now hight I Philostrate not worth a mite.[5] 700
Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno;
Thus hath your ire our lineage all fordo,
Save only me and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martíreth[6] in prisón.
And over all this, to slay me utterly, 705
Love hath his fiery dart so brenningly[7]
Ystickéd[8] through my trué careful heart,
That shapen[9] was my death erst[10] than my shirt.[11]
Ye slay me with your eyen Emily;
Ye be the causé wherefore that I die. 710
Of all the reménant of mine other care
Ne set I not the mountance[12] of a tare,
So that I could do aught to your pleasance."[13]
And with that word he fell down in a trance

[1] Sike—sigh. [2] Real—royal. [3] Caitiff—adj. wretched. [4] Thrall—enslaved. [5] Mite — small worm. [6] Martireth — tormenteth. [7] Brenningly — burningly. [8] Ysticked — pierced. [9] Shapen — ordained, contrived. [10] Erst—first, before. [11] Shirt—*see note below.* [12] Mountance—amount. [13] Pleasance—pleasure.

V. 708. *erst than my shirt.*] "This saying seems," says the *Glossary*, "to mean the linen in which a new-born child is wrapped." So in *Troilus and Cressida*, b. iii.

"O fatal sistren, which, e'er any cloth
Me shapen was, my destiny me spun."

Again, the *Legend of Good Women*. Hypermnestra—

"Since first that day that shapen was my shirt,
Or by the fatal sister had my doom."

A longé time ;—and afterward up start 715
This Palamon, that thought throughout his heart
He felt a coldé sword suddénly glide ;
For ire he quoke,[1] no longer would he hide :
And when that he had heard Arcite's tale,
As he were wood,[2] with facé dead and pale, 720
He start him up out of the bushes thick
And saidé ; "False Arcite, false traitour wicke,
Now art thou hent,[3] that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have all this pain and woe,
And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn, 725
As I full oft have told thee herebeforn,
And hast bejaped[4] here Duke Theseus,
And falsely changéd hast thy namé thus ;
I would be dead, or ellés thou shalt die :
Thou shalt not love my lady Emily, 730
But I will love her only, and no mo ;
For I am Palamon thy mortal foe.
And though that I no weap'n have in this place,
But out of prison am astart by grace,[5]
I dreadé naught that either thou shalt die, 735
Or thou ne shalt not loven Emily :
Choose which thou wilt, for thou shalt not astart."
This Arcite, then with full dispiteous[6] heart,
When he him knew, and had his talé heard,
As fierce as a león pull'd out a sword, 740
And saidé thus ; "By God, that sitt'th above,
N'ere[7] it that thou art sick and wood[2] for love,
And eke that thou no weap'n hast in this place,
Thou shouldést never out of this grové pace,[8]
That thou ne shouldést dien of mine hond ; 745
For I defy the surety and the bond
Which that thou sayst that I have made to thee.
What ! very fool, think well that love is free,
And I will love her maugre[9] all thy might.
But, for thou[10] art a worthy gentle knight, 750
And wilnest[11] to darraine[12] her by batáille,
Have here my truth, to-morrow' I will not fail,
Withoutén weeting[13] of any other wight,
That here I will be founden as a knight,
And bringen harness right enough for thee, 755
And choose the best, and leave the worst for me :

[1] Quoke—shook. [2] Wood—mad. [3] Hent—caught. [4] Bejaped—deceived, laughed at. [5] Astart by grace—escaped by favour. [6] Dispiteous—unpitying, cruel. [7] Ne're it—were it not. [8] Pace—go. [9] Maugre—malgré, in spite of. [10] But for thou—since however thou. [11] Wilnest—desirest. [12] Darraine—contest. [13] Weeting—knowing.

And meat and drinké this night will I bring
Enough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding;
And if so be that thou my lady win
And slay me in this wood, there I am in,
Thou mayst well have thy lady as for me."
This Palamon answérd, "I grant it thee:"
And thus they been departed till a-morrow,
When each of them hath laid his faith to borrow.
O Cupid! out of allé charity,
O regne![2] that wilt no fellow have with thee,
Full soth is said, that lové ne lordship
Will not his thankés[3] have no fellowship.
Well finden that Arcite' and Palamon.
Arcite' is ridden anon unto the town,
And on the morrow, or it were day-líght,
Full privily two harness hath he dight,[4]
Both suffisant and meeté to darraine[5]
The battle in the field betwixt them twain;
And on his horse, alone as he was borne,
He carrieth all this harness him beforne;
And in the grove, at time and place yset,
This Arcite' and this Palamon been met.
Tho[6] changen 'gan the colour in their face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Thrace
That standeth at a gappé with a spear,
When hunted is the lion or the bear,
And heareth him come rushing in the greves,[7]
And breaking both the boughés and the leaves,
And think'th "Here com'th my mortal enemy,
Withouten fail he must be dead or I;
For either I must slay him at the gap,
Or he must slay me, if that me mishap."
So fareden they in changing of their hue,
As far as either of them other knew.
There n'as no good day, ne no saluing,[8]
But strait withouten wordés' rehearsing
Everich of them help to armen other
As friendly as he were his owen brother;
And after that with sharpé spearés strong
They foinden[9] each at other wonder long.
Thou mightest weenen[10] that this Palamon
In his fighting were as a wood[11] leon,
And as a cruel tiger was Arcite:
As wildé boars 'gan they together smite,

[1] To borrow—in pledge. [2] Regne—dominion. [3] His than
with his good will. [4] Dight—prepared. [5] Darraine—co
[6] Tho—then. [7] Greves—groves. [8] Saluing—welcoming. [9] Fo
—lounged, thrust. [10] Weenen—supposed. [11] Wood—mad, ra

That frothen white as foam for iré wood :
Up to the ancle fought they in their blood :
And in this wise I let them fighting dwell,
And forth I will of Theseus you tell.
The destiny, minſter general, 805
That executeth in the world o'er all
The púrveyance[1] that God hath seen beforn,
So strong it is, that though the world had sworn
The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
Yet sometime it shall fallen on a day 810
That falleth not efté[2] in a thousand year,
For certainly our appetités here,
Be it of war, or peace, or hate, or love,
All is this ruléd by the sight above.
This mean I now by mighty Theseus, 815
That for to hunten is so desirous,
And namely at the greaté hart in May,
That in his bed there dawneth him no day
That he n'is[3] clad, and ready for to ride
With hunt and horn, and houndés him beside ; 820
For in his hunting hath he such delight,
That it is all his joy and appetite
To be himself the greaté harté's bane ;
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Clear was the day, as I have told e'er this, 825
And Theseus, with allé joy and bliss,
With his Hypolita, the fairé queen,
And Emily, yclothed all in green,
On hunting been they ridden réally :[4]
And to the grove, that stood there fasté by, 830
In which there was a hart as men him told,
Duke Theseus the straité way hath hold,
And to the launde[5] he rideth him full right,
There was the hart ywont to have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his way.
This duke will have a course at him or tway 835
With houndés, such as him lust[6] to command.
And when this duke was comen to the launde,[5]
Under the sun he lookéd, and anon
He was 'ware of Arcité and Palamon, 840
That foughten breme,[7] as it were bullés two.
The brighté swordés wenten to and fro
So hideously that with the leasté stroke
It seemed that it wouldé fell an oak,
But what they weren, nothing he ne wot : 845
This duke his courser with his spurrés smote,

[1] Purveyance—prevoyance, foresight, disposition. [2] Efte—again. [3] N'is—is not. [4] Really—royally. [5] Launde—plain. [6] Lust—delighted. [7] Breme—furiously.

And at a start he was betwixt them two,
And pulléd out a sword and criéd,—"Ho!
No more, up pain of losing of your head;
By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead 850
That smiteth any stroke that I may seen!
But telleth me what mistere[1] men ye been,
That be so hardy for to fighten here
Withouten any judge or officer,
As though it were in listés really."[2] 855
This Palamon answéred hastily
And saidé; "Sir, what needeth wordés mo?
We have the death deservéd bothé two:
Two woful wretches be we, two caitives,[3]
That be accumbred of our owen lives, 860
And as thou art a rightful lord and judge
Ne give us neither mercy nor refuge;
And slay me first for sainté charity,
But slay my fellow eke as well as me;
Or slay him first, for though thou know it lite,[4] 865
This is thy mortal foe, this is Arcite,
That from thy land is banish'd on his head,
For which he hath deservéd to be dead;
For this is he that came unto thy gate,
And saidé that he highté Philostrate. 870
Thus hath he japéd[5] thee full many a year,
And thou hast makéd him thy chief squiér,
And this is he that loveth Emily.
"For sith the day is come that I shall die
I maké plainly my confessión, 875
That I am thilké[6] woful Palamon
That hath thy prison broken wilfully:
I am thy mortal foe, and it am I
That loveth so hot Emily the bright,
That I would dien present in her sight, 880
Therefore I axé death and my jewise;[7]
But slay my fellow in the samé wise,
For both we have deservéd to be slain."
This worthy duke answérd anon again,
And said, "This is a short conclusión; 885
Your owen mouth, by your confessión,
Hath damnéd[8] you, and I will it record;
It needeth not to pain you with the cord:
Ye shall be dead by mighty Mars the Red."
The queen anon for very womanhead 890

[1] Mistere men—kind or condition of men. [2] Really—royally. [3] Caitives — wretches, synonymous. [4] Lite — little. [5] Japed — tricked, deceived. [6] Thilke—that. [7] Jewise—doom. [8] Damned —condemned.

'Gan for to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
Great pity was it, as it thought them all,
That ever such a chancé should befall,
For gentlemen they were of great estate, 895
And nothing but for love was this debate;
And saw their bloody woundés wide and sore,
And allé crieden bothé less and more,
"Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all,"
And on their baré knees adown they fall, 900
And would have kiss'd his feet there as he stood,
Till at the last aslaked[1] was his mood;
(For pity runneth soon in gentle heart)
And though he first for iré quoke[2] and start,
He hath considered shortly in a clause 905
The trespass of them both, and eke the cause;
And although that his ire their guilt accuséd,
Yet in his reason he them both excuséd;
As thus; he thoughté well that every man
Will help himself in love if that he can 910
And eke deliver himself out of prisón:
And eke his hearté had compassion
Of women, for they wepten ever-in-on,[3]
And in his gentle heart he thought anon,
And soft unto himself he sayéd, "Fie 915
Upon a lord that will have no mercy,
But be a lion both in word and deed,
To them that be in répentance and dread,
As well as to a proud dispiteous[4] man
That will maintainen that he first began. 920
That lord hath little of discretión
That in such case can[5] no división,
But weigheth pride and humbless after on."
And shortly when his ire is thus agone,
He 'gan to looken up with eyen light, 925
And spake these samé wordés all on height.
"The god of Love, a *benedicite!*
How mighty and how great a lord is he?
Against his might, there gainen non obstácles,
He may be clep'd a God for his mirácles, 930
For he can maken at his owen guise
Of everich heart as that him list devise.[6]
"Lo, here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quitely[7] weren out of my prisón,

[1] Aslaked—slacked, abated. [2] Quoke—trembled. [3] Ever-in-on continually. [4] Dispiteous—relentless. [5] Can no division—can make no division. [6] Him list devise—such as he may please to devise. [7] Quitely—freely.

And might have liv'd in Thebés réally,[1]
And weten[2] I am their mortal enemy,
And that their death li'th in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugre[3] their eyen two,
Ybrought them hither bothé for to die;
Now looketh, is not this a high folly?
Who may be a fool, but if that he love?[4]
Behold for Goddés sake, that sitt'th above,
See how they bleed! be they not well array'd?
Thus hath their lord, the god of Love, them paid
Their wages, and their fees for their servíce,
And yet they weenen for to be full wise
That serven Love for aught that may befall.
And yet is this the besté game of all,
That she for whom they have this jolity
Con them therefore as muchel thank[5] as me.
She wot no more of all this hoté fare,
By God, than wot a cuckow or a hare.
But all must be assayéd hot or cold;
A man must be a fool either young or old;
I wot it by myself full yore agone;
For in my time a servant was I one;
And therefore since I know of lovés pain,
And wot how sore it can a man distrain;
As he that oft hath been caught in his las,[6]
I you forgive all wholly this trespáss,
At réquest of the queen that kneeleth here,
And eke of Emily, my sister dear:
And ye shall both anon unto me swear,
That never more ye shall my country dere,[7]
Ne maken war upon me night or day,
But be my friendés in all that ye may.
I you forgive this trespass every deal."
And they him sware his axing fair and well,
And him of lordship and of mercy pray'd,
And he them granted grace, and thus he said:
"To speak of réal[8] lineage and richess,
Though that she were a queen or a princess,
Each of you both is worthy doubtéless
To wedden when time is, but nathéless
I speak as for my sister Emily,
For whom ye have this strife and jealousy,
Ye wot yourself she may not wedden two
At onés, though ye fighten evermo;

[1] Really—royally. [2] Weten—known. [3] Maugre—notwithst
ing. [4] But if that he love—that is, "who should be a fool, ur
it be he who is in love?" [5] Con them as muchel thank—is as m
pleased, or obliged. [6] Las—snare. [7] Dere—injure. [8] Real—r

But one of you, all be him loth or lief,[1]
He must go pipen in an ivy leaf: 980
This is to say, she may not have you both,
All be ye never so jealous or so wroth.
And forthy[2] I you put in this degree,
That each of you shall have his destiny
As him is shape;[3] and hearkeneth in what wise; 985
Lo hear your end of that I shall devise.
"My will is this for plat[4] conclusión
Withouten any replicatión,
If that you liketh, take it for the best;
That everich of you shall go where him lest 990
Freely withouten ransom or dangér,
And this day fifty weekés, far ne near,[5]
Everích of you shall bring a hundred knightés,
Arméd for listés up at allé rightés,
All ready to darrain[6] her by batáille. 995
And this behete[7] I you withouten fail
Upon my truth, and as I am a knight,
That whether of you bothé hath that might,
This is to say, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of now, 1000
Slay his contráry, or out of listés drive,
Him shall I given Emily to wive
To whom that Fortune giv'th so fair a grace.
"The listés shall I maken in this place,
And God so wisely[8] on my soulé rue,[9] 1005
As I shall even judgé be and true.
Ye shall none other endé with me maken
That one of you ne shall be dead or taken;
And if you thinketh this is well ysaid,
Saith your advice, and holdeth you apaid:[10] 1010
This is your end and your conclusión."
Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joyé but Arcite?
Who could it tell, or who could it indite,
The joyé that is makéd in the place 1015
When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?[11]
But down on knees went every manner wight,
And thankéd him with all their heartés might,
And namély these Thebans often sith.[12]
And thus with good hope and with hearté blithe 1020
They take their leavé, 'and homeward 'gan they ride
To Thebés, with his oldé wallés wide.

[1] Lief—glad. [2] Forthy—therefore. [3] Shape, for shapen—prepared. [4] Plat—plain. [5] Far ne near—neither more nor less. [6] Darrain—strive for. [7] Behete—promise. [8] Wisely—surely. [9] Rue—have compassion. [10] Holdeth you apaid—consider yourselves satisfied. [11] Grace—boon, favour. [12] Sith—times.

I trow men wouldé deem it negligence
If I forget to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that go'th so busily 1025
To maken up the listés réally;[1]
That such a noble theátre as it was
I dare well sain in all this world there n'as.[2]
The circuít a milé was about,
Walléd of stone, and ditchéd all without; 1030
Round was the shape, in manner of a compass
Full of degrees, the height of sixty pas,[3]
That when a man was set on one degree
He letted[4] not his fellow for to see.
Eastward there stood a gate of marble white, 1035
Westward right such another in th' opposite;
And shortly to concluden, such a place
Was never in earthé in so little' a space,
For in the land there n'as no craftés-man
That geometry or arsmetriké[5] can, 1040
Ne portrayour, ne carver of imáges,
That Theseus ne gave him meat and wages
The theátre for to maken and devise.
And for to do his rite and sacrifice,
He eastward hath upon the gate above, 1045
In worship of Venus, goddess of Love,
Done make an altar and an oratory,
And westward, in the mind and in memóry
Of Mars he makéd hath right such another,
That costé largély of gold a fother: 1050
And northward, in a turret on the wall,
Of alabaster white and red coral,
An oratory riché for to see,
In worship of Dián of chastity,
Hath Theseus done wrought[6] in noble wise. 1055
But yet had I forgotten to devise
The noble carving and the portraitures,
The shape, the countenance, of the figures,
That weren in these oratories three.
First in the temple of Venus mayst thou see 1060
Wrought on the wall, full piteous to behold,
The broken sleepés, and the sikés[7] cold,
The sacred tearés, and the waimentings,[8]
The fiery strokés of the desirings,
That Lové's servants in this life enduren, 1065
The oathés that their covénants assuren.

[1] Really — royally. [2] N'as — was not. [3] Pas, (Fr.) — paces. [4] Letted—prevented. [5] Arsmetrike—arithmetic: so called in our ancient language. [6] Done wrought—caused to be wrought. [7] Sikes —sighs. [8] Waimentings—lamentations.

Pleasance and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness,
Beauty and Youth, Baudry and Richess,
Charmés and Force, Lesings and Flattery,
Dispencé, Business, and Jealousy, 1070
That wearéd of yellow goldés[1] a garland,
And had a cuckoo sitting on her hand,
Feastés, instruments, and carolés and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstánces
Of Love, which that I reckon and reckon shall, 1075
By order weren painted on the wall,
And more than I can make of mentión;
For sothly[2] all the mount of Citheron,
There Venus hath her principal dwelling,
Was showéd on the wall in portraying, 1080
With all the garden, and the lustiness.[3]
Naught was forgotten the porter Idleness,
Ne Narcissus the fair of yore agone;
Ne yet the folly of King Solomon;
Ne yet the greaté strength of Hercules; 1085
Th' enchantment of Medea and Circes;
Ne of Turnus the hardy fierce couráge,
The riché Crœsus caitif[4] in servage.
Thus may ye seen that wisdom nor richess,
Beauty nor sleighté,[5] strength nor hardiness, 1090
Ne may with Venus holden champarty,[6]
For as her list the worldé may she gie.[7]
Lo, all these folk so caught were in her las[8]
Till they for woe full often said Alas!
Sufficeth here examples one or two, 1095
And yet I couldé reckon a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked fleeting in the largé sea;
And from the navel down all coveréd was
With wavés green, and bright as any glass. 1100
A citole[9] in her right hand haddé she,
And on her head full seemly[10] for to see,
A rosé-garland fresh and well smelling;
Above her head her dovés flickering:

[1] Goldes—the flower called turn-sol. [2] Sothly—truly. [3] Lustiness—delight. [4] Caitif—wretch. [5] Sleighte—skill. [6] Champarty—share of power. [7] Gie—direct. [8] Las—toil, snare. [9] Citole—a musical instrument. *See note below.* [10] Seemly—becomingly.

V. 1101. *A citole.*] Sir John Hawkins, in his *History of Music*, vol. ii. p. 106, supposes it to have been a species of dulcimer, and that the name is a corruption of the Latin *cistella*. Besides the passage he has quoted from Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, 178, it is mentioned again in fol. 189, among the instruments which "sounded low."

Before her stood her soné Cupido, 1105
Upon his shoulders wingés had he two,
And blind he was, as it is often seen;
A bow he bare and arrows bright and keen.
Why should I not as well eke tell you all
The portraiture that was upon the wall 1110
Within the temple' of mighty Mars the Rede?
All painted was the wall in length and brede
Like to the estres [1] of the grisly place
That highté the great temple' of Mars in Thrace,
In thilké cold and frosty región, 1115
There as Mars hath his sovereign mansión.
First on the wall was painted a forést,
In which there wonneth [2] neither man nor beast,
With knotty gnarry [3] barren treés old
Of stubbés sharp and hideous to behold, 1120
In which there ran a rumble [4] and a swough,[5]
As though a storm should bursten every bough;
And downward from a hill under a bent [6]
There stood the templ' of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burned [7] steel, of which th' entrée 1125
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see;
And thereout came a rage and such a vise [8]
That it made all the gatés for to rise.
The northern light in at the dooré shone,
For window on the wall ne was there none 1130
Through which men mighten any light discern:
The door was all of adamant etern,
Yclenchéd overthwart and endélong
With iron tough, and for to make it strong,
Every pillar the temple to sustain 1135
Was tonné-great, of iron bright and sheen.[9]
There saw I first the dark imagining
Of Felony, and all the compassing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede,[10]
The pickpursé, and eke the palé drede,[11] 1140

[1] Estres—interior of a building. [2] Wonneth—dwelleth. [3] Gnarry—synonymous with knotty. [4] Rumble—rumbling noise. [5] Swough—swooning noise. *See note below.* [6] Bent—declivity. [7] Burned—burnished. [8] Vise—rush. [9] Sheen—shining. [10] Glede—burning coal. [11] Drede—fear, dread.

V. 1121. *rumble and a swough.*] The term *swough*, I take it, answers to the modern epithet "groaning," as applied to the noise the wind makes. "A *sugh* of wind" is still a common expression in the north of England: Burns uses it. It also has, in all probability, a reference to the sigh a person makes in swooning. The poet, Keats, evidently understood it in this sense, when, in his fine hymn to Pan, in the Endymion, he speaks of winds—

"Swooning drearily on barren moors."

The smiler with the knife under the cloak;
The shepen[1] burning with the blacké smoke;
The treason of the murdering in the bed;
The open war, with woundés all bebled;
Conteke[2] with bloody knife and sharp menáce: 1145
All full of chirking[3] was that sorry place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
His hearté's blood hath bathéd all his hair;
The nail ydriven in the shode[4] on height;
The coldé death, with mouth gaping upright. 1150
Amiddés of the temple sat Mischance,
With díscomfort and sorry countenance;
Yet saw I Woodness[5] laughing in his rage,
Arméd Complaint, Outheés,[6] and fierce Outrage;
The carrain[7] in the bush, with throat ycarven, 1155
A thousand slain, and not of qualm ystarven;[8]
The tyrant, with the prey by force yreft;[9]
The town destroyéd,—there was nothing left:
Yet saw I burnt the shippés hoppésteres,[10]
The hunt[11] ystrangled with the wildé bears; 1160
The sow fretting[12] the child right in the cradle,
The cook yscalléd for all his long ladle:

[1] Shepen — stable. [2] Conteke — strife, contest. [3] Chirking—hateful sound. [4] Shode—hair on the head. [5] Woodness—madness. [6] Outhees—outcries. [7] Carrain—carcase putrified. [8] Not of qualm ystarven—not dead from disease, or sickness. [9] Yreft—torn away. [10] Hoppesteres—*see note below.* [11] Hunt—huntsman. *See note.* [12] Fretting—devouring.

V. 1159. *the shippes hoppesteres.*] It is needless to trouble the reader with the various readings and interpretations of this passage. To *hoppe*, in Saxon, signified exactly the same as to *dance*, though with us it has acquired a ludicrous sense; and the termination *stre* or *ster* was used to denote a female, like *trix* in Latin. As therefore a female baker was called a bakester, a female brewer a brewester, a female webbe or weaver a webbester, so, I conceive, a female hopper or dancer was called an *hoppester*. It is well known that a ship, in most languages, is considered as a female.—Though the idea of a ship dancing on the waves be not an unpoetical one, the adjunct *hoppesters* does not seem so proper in this place as the *bellatrici* of The Theseida, l. vii. :—

"Vedevi anco le navi *bellatrici*,
In voti carri e li volti guastati."

In another respect Chaucer has improved upon his original, by representing the ships on fire. It should be observed that the principal circumstances in Boccace's description of this temple of Mars are copied from Statius, l. vii.—*Tyr.*

V. 1160. *The hunt.*] The huntsman, from the Sax. *hunta*. See before, ver. 820, and below, ver. 1716. I know not what to think of the two following lines. Was Chaucer serious, or did he mean, in this and some other similar passages, to ridicule the minute and often incongruous descriptions of the old romancers? The lines are in all the MSS.—*Tyr.*

Naught was forgot by th' infortune of Marté
The carter overridden with his carté;
Under the wheel full low he lay adown. 1165
  There were also of Martés división
Th' armourer and the bowyer, and the smith,
That forgeth sharpé swordés on his stith;[1]
And all above depainted in a tow'r,
Saw I a Conquest,[2] sitting in great honóur, 1170
With thilké[3] sharpé sword over his head
Yhanging by a subtle twinéd thread.
Depainted was the slaughter of Julius,
Of great Nero and of Antonius:
All be that thilké[3] time they were unborn, 1175
Yet was their death depainted there beforne,
By menacing of Mars, right by figúre,
So was it shewéd in that portraiture
As is depainted in the circles above,
Who shall be slain or ellés dead for love. 1180
Sufficeth one example in stories old;
I may not reckon them allé though I wold.
  The statue of Mars upon a carté stood
Arméd, and lokéd grim as he were wood,[4]
And over his head there shinen two figúres 1185
Of starrés that been clepéd in scriptures,
That one Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of Armés was arrayed thus;
A wolf there stood before him at his feet
With eyen red, and of a man he eat: 1190
With subtle pencil painted was this story,
In redouting[5] of Mars and of his glory.
  Now to the temple of Dián the chaste
As shortly as I can I will me haste,
To tellen you of the descriptión, 1195
Depainted by the wallés up and down,
Of hunting and of shamefast chastity.
There saw I how woful Calistopé,
When that Dián aggrievéd was with her,
Was turned from a woman to a bear, 1200
And after was she made the lodéstar:[6]
Thus was it painted, I can say no farr;[7]
Her son is eke a star as men may see.
There saw I Dané yturned to a tree,
I mean not her the goddess Diáné, 1205
But Peneus' daughter, which that highté Dané.
There saw I Acteon a hart ymaked,
For vengeance that he saw Dián' all naked:

[1] Stith—anvil. [2] Conquest—assembly. [3] Thilke—that. [4] Wood—mad. [5] Redouting—reverence. [6] Lodestar—north-star. [7] Farr—farther.

I saw how that his houndés have him caught,
And fretten[1] him, for that they knew him not. 1210
Yet painted was a little farthermore
How Atalanta hunted the wild boar,
And Meleáger, and many another mo,
For which Diana wrought them care and woe.
There saw I many another wonder story, 1215
The which me list not drawen to memóry.
This goddess on a hart full highé seat,[2]
With smallé houndés all about her feet,
And underneath her feet she had a moon,
Waxing it was, and shouldé wanen soon. 1220
In gaudy green her statue clothéd was,
With bow in hand, and arrows in a case.
Her eyen casté she full low adown,
There Pluto hath his darké región.
A woman travailling was her beforn, 1225
But, for[3] her child so longé was unborn,
Full piteously Lucina 'gan she call,
And sayéd; "Help, for thou mayst best of all."
Well could he painten lifely that it wrought,
With many a florin he the hués[4] bought. 1230
Now been these listés made, and Theseus
That at his greaté cost arrayéd thus
The temples, and the theátre everydeal,[5]
When it was done him likéd wonder well.
But stint[6] I will of Theseus a lite,[7] 1235
And speak of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approacheth of their returning,
That everich should a hundred knightés bring,
The battle to darrain,[8] as I you told;
And at Athenes their covenant for to hold, 1240
Hath everich of them brought a hundred knightés
Well arméd for the war at allé rightés.[9]
And sikerly,[10] there trowéd many a man
That never sithen[11] that the world began,
As for to speak of knighthood of their hand, 1245
As far as God hath makéd sea and land,
N'as of so few so noble a company;
For every wight that loved chivalry,
And would his thankés[12] have a passing name,
Hath prayéd that he might be of that game, 1250
And well was him that thereto chosen was,
For if there fell to-morrow such a case,

[1] Fretten—worried, devoured. [2] Seat—seated. [3] For—because. [4] Hues—colours. [5] Everydeal—every part. [6] Stint—stop, pause. [7] Lite—little. [8] Darrain—contest. [9] At alle rightes—at all points. [10] Sikerly—surely. [11] Sithen—since; from si'then—since then. [12] His thankes—his good will.

Ye knowen well that every lusty knight
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in England or elléswhere, 1255
They would their thankés[1] willen to be there.
To fight for a lady, a *benedicite!*
It were a lusty[2] sighté for to see.
And right so fareden they with Palamon.
With him there wenten knightés many one, 1260
Some will be arméd in a habergeon,[3]
And in a breast-plate, and in a gipon;[4]
And some will have a pair of platés large,
And some will have a Prusse[5] shield or a targe;
Some will be armed on his leggés wele, 1265
And have an axe, and some a mace of steel.
There n'is[6] no newé guise that it n'as old.
Arméd they weren as I have you told
Everich after his opinión.
There mayst thou see coming with Palamon 1270
Licurge himself, the greaté King of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
The circles of his eyen in his head
They gloweden betwixen yellow and red,
And like a griffon looked he about, 1275
With combéd hairés on his browés stout;
His limbés great, his brawnés hard and strong,
His shoulders broad, his armés round and long;
And as the guisé was in his countrée,
Full high upon a car of gold stood he, 1280
With fouré whité bullés in the trace.
Instead of coat armoúr on his harness,
With nailés yellow, and bright as any gold,
He had a bearé's skin, cole-black for old.
His longé hair was comb'd behind his back, 1285
As any raven's feather it shone for black.
A wreath of gold arm-great,[7] of hugé weight,
Upon his head sate full of stonés bright,
Of fine rubiés and of diámonds.
About his car there wenten white alauns,[8] 1290

[1] Their thankes—their good will. [2] Lusty—cheering, pleasant. [3] Habergeon — diminutive of hauberk; a small coat of mail. [4] Gipon—short cassock. [5] Prusse—Prussian. [6] N'is; n'as—is not; was not. [7] Arm-great—as thick as a man's arm. [8] Alauns—dogs. *See note.*

V. 1290. *alauns.*] *Alano* is the Spanish name of a species of dog, which the dictionaries call a mastiff. Sir J. Bouchier's translation of Froissart, b. iv. c. 24, "foure coursers and two *allans* of Spaygne fayre and good."—*Tyr.*

Twenty and more, as great as any steer,
To hunten at the lion or the deer,
And followed him, with muzzle fast ybound,
Collar'd with gold, and tourettes [1] filéd round.
A hundred lordés had he in his rout [2] 1295
Arméd full well, with heartés stern and stout.
With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The great Emetrius the King of Ind,
Upon a steedé bay, trappéd in steel,
Covered with cloth of gold diápred wele, 1300
Came riding like the god of Armés, Mars;
His coat armoúr was of a cloth of Tars,[3]
Couched [4] with pearlés white, and round, and great;
His saddle was of burnt gold new ybeat; [5]
A mantélet upon his shoulders hanging 1305
Bret-ful [6] of rubies red, as fire sparkling;
His crispé hair like ringés was yrun,
And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun;
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrine,
His lippés round, his colour was sanguine, 1310
A fewé fracknés [7] in his face ysprent,[8]
Betwixen yellow and black somdeal yment,[9]
And as a lion he his loking cast:
Of five-and-twenty years his age I cast;
His beard was well begunnen for to spring, 1315
His voice was as a trumpé thundering;
Upon his head he wear'd of laurel green,
A garland fresh and lusty [10] for to seen;
Upon his hand he bare for his deduit [11]
An eagle tame, as any lily white: 1320
A hundred lordés had he with him there,
All arméd, save their heads, in all their gear,
Full richély in allé manner thingés;
For trusteth well that earlés, dukés, kingés,
Were gatheréd in this noble company, 1325
For love and for encrease of chivalry.

[1] Tourettes—rings. *See note.* [2] Rout—retinue. [3] Tars—a sort of silk. [4] Couched—trimmed; from *couché*, bedded. [5] Ybeat—beaten, manufactured. [6] Bretful—brimfull. [7] Fracknes—freckles. [8] Ysprent—sprinkled. [9] Yment—mingled. [10] Lusty—pleasant, agreeable. [11] Deduit—pleasure, amusement.

V. 1294. *tourettes.*] From the Fr. *touret*, which is explained by Cotgrave to signify, among other things, the little ring by which a hawk's lune (or leash) is fastened unto the jesses. Mr. Warton has shown, by several quotations, that *toretes* were affixed to the collars of dogs for a similar purpose. *Hist. of Eng. Poet.* p. 364. Our author says that "the ringe [of the astrolabe] renneth in a manner of a *turet*."—*Tr. of Ast.* fol. 291, b.—*Tyr.*

About this king there ran on every part·
Full many a tame lión and leópart.
And in this wise these lordés all and some
Been on the Sunday to the city come 1330
Abouten prime,[1] and in the town alight.
This Theseus, this duke, this worthy knight,
When he had brought them into his citee,
And inn'd them evereach at his degree,
He feasteth them, and doth so great labóur 1335
To easen them, and do them all honóur,
That yet men weenen [2] that no mannés wit
Of none estate ne could amenden it.
The minstralcy, the service at the feast,
The greaté giftés to the most and least, 1340
The rich array of Theseus' paláce,
Nor who sate first or last upon the dais,[3]
What ladies fairest been or best dancing,
Or which of them can carol best or sing,
Nor who most feelingly speakéth of love, 1345
What hawkés sitten on the perch above,
What houndés liggen [4] on the floor adown,
Of all this now make I no mentión,
But of the effect, that thinketh me the best;
Now cometh the point, and hearkeneth if you lest.
The Sunday night or day began to spring, 1351
When Palamon the larké heardé sing,
Although it n'ere [5] not day by hourés two,
Yet sang the lark, and Palamon right tho [6]
With holy heart, and with a high couráge 1355
He rose, to wenden [7] on his pilgrimage
Unto the blissful Citheréa benign,
I meané Venus, honourable and digne,
And in her hour he walketh forth a pace
Unto the listés, there [8] her temple was, 1360
And down he kneeleth, and with humble cheer
And hearté sore he said as ye shall hear:
"Fairest of fair, O lady mine Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou gladder of the Mount of Cítheron! 1365
For thilké [9] love thou haddest to Adon
Have pity on my bitter tearés' smart,
And take mine humble prayér at thine heart.
Alas! I ne have no languáge to tell
The effecté nor the torment of mine hell; 1370

[1] Prime—first quarter of the day. [2] Weenen—think. [3] Dais—the raised platform in a banqueting hall. [4] Liggen—are lying. [5] N'ere—were not. [6] Tho—then. [7] Wenden—go. [8] There—where. [9] Thilke—that, the same.

Mine hearté may mine harmés not bewray;
I am so cónfuse that I cannot say:
But mercy, lady bright! that knowest wele
My thought, and seest what harmés that I feel:
Consider all this, and rue[1] upon my sore, 1375
As wisely[2] as I shall for evermore
Emforth[3] my might thy trué servant be,
And holden war alway with chastity;
That make I mine avow so ye may help,
I keepé[4] naught of armés for to yelp,[5] 1380
Nor ask I not to-morrow to have victóry,
Nor rénown in this casé, nor vain glory
Of price of armés, blowen up and down,
But I would have fully possessión
Of Emily, and die in her servíce; 1385
Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.
I recké not but it may better be
To have victóry' of them or they of me,
So that I have my lady in mine arms;
For though so be that Mars is god of Arms, 1390
Your virtue is so great in heaven above,
That if you list I shall well have my love.
Thy temple will I worship evermo,
And on thine altar, where I ride or go,
I will do sacrifice, and firés bete.[6] 1395
And if ye will not so, my lady sweet!
Then pray I you to-morrow with a spear
That Arcita me through the hearté bear;
Then reck[7] I not when I have lost my life
Though that Arcita win her to his wife. 1400
This is the effect and end of my prayére,
Give me my love thou blissful lady dear!"
When th' orison was done of Palamon
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full piteously,[8] with allé circumstánces, 1405
All[9] tell I not as now his observánces.
But at the last the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signé whereby that he took
That his prayér accepted was that day;
For though the signé shewéd a delay, 1410
Yet wist he well that granted was his boon,
And with glad heart he went him home full soon.
The third hour inequal that Palamon
Began to Venus' temple for to gone.

[1] Rue—take pity. [2] Wisely—truly. [3] Emforth—even with. [4] Keepe—care. [5] Yelp—boast. [6] Bete—prepare. [7] Reck—care. [8] Piteously—imploringly. [9] All—although.

Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily, 1415
And to the temple of Dián 'gan hie.
Her maidens that she thither with her led
Full readily with them the fire they had,
Th' encénse, the clothés, and the remnant all,
That to the sacrificé 'longen shall, 1420
The hornés full of mead, as was the guise;
There lackéd naught to do her sacrifice.
Smoking the temple, full of clothés fair,
This Emily with hearté debonair
Her body wash'd with water of a well; 1425
But how she did her rite I dare not tell;
But it be any thing in general,
And yet it were a game to hearen all;
To him that meaneth well it n'ere[1] no charge;
But it is good a man to be at large. 1430
Her bright hair combéd was, untresséd all;
A coroun of a green oak cerial[2]
Upon her head was set full fair and meet:
Two firés on the altar 'gan she bete,[3]
And did her thingés as men may behold 1435
In Stace' of Thebés, and these bookés old.
When kindled was the fire, with piteous cheer
Unto Diane she spake as ye may hear:
"O chasté goddess of the woodés green,
To whom both heaven, and earth, and sea, is seen,
Queen of the reign of Pluto dark and low, 1441
Goddess of maidens, that mine heart hast know[4]
Full many a year, and wo'st[5] what I desire,
As keep me from thy vengeance and thine ire,
That Acteon aboughté[6] cruelly! 1445
Chasté goddéss! well wottest thou that I
Desire to be a maiden all my life,
Ne never will I be no love nor wife:
I am (thou wo'st)[5] yet of thy company,
A maid, and love huntíng and venery,[7] 1450
And for to walken in the woodés wild,
And not to be a wife and be with child;
Naught will I knowen company of man;
Now help me, Lady, since ye may and can,
For those three formés that thou hast in thee 1455
And Palamon, that hath such love to me,
And eke Arcité, that loveth me so sore,
This grace[8] I praié thee withouten more,

[1] N'ere—were not. [2] Cerial—appertaining to the oak: Lat. *cerrus*. [3] Bete—prepare. [4] Know—(for) known. [5] Wo'st, *i.e.* wottest—knowest. [6] Aboughte—suffered for. [7] Venery—anothe term for hunting, meaning field sports in general. [8] Grace—favour.

As sendé love and peace betwixt them two,
And from me turn away their heartés so, 1460
That all their hoté love and their desire,
And all their busy torment and their fire
Be queint[1] or turnéd in another place.
And if so be thou wilt not do me grace,[2]
Or if my destiny be shapen so 1465
That I shall needés have one of them two,
As send me him that most desireth me.
" Beholdé, goddess of clean Chastity !
The bitter tears that on my cheekés fall :
Since thou art maid, and keeper of us all, 1470
My maidenhood thou keep and well conserve,
And while I live a maid I will thee serve."
The firés burn upon the altar clear
While Emily was thus in her prayére,
But suddenly she saw a sighté quaint ;[3] 1475
For right anon one of the firés queint[1]
And quick'd[4] again, and after that anon
That other fire was queint and all agone,
And as it queint it made a whistleing
As do the brandés wet in their burning ; 1480
And at the brandés' end outran anon
As it were bloody droppés many one ;
For which so sore aghast was Emily,
That she was well nigh mad, and 'gan to cry,
For she ne wisté what it signified, 1485
But only for the fearé thus she cried
And wept, that it was pity for to hear.
And therewithal Diana 'gan appear
With bow in hand, right as a huntéress,
And saidé, " Daughter, stint[5] thine heaviness. 1490
Among the goddés high it is affirméd,
And by' etern word written and confirméd,
Thou shalt be wedded unto one of tho[6]
That have for thee so muchel care and wo,
But unto which of them I may[7] not tell. 1495
Farewell, for here I may no longer dwell ;
The firés which that on mine altar brenne
Shall thee declaren e'er that thou go henne[8]
Thine áventure of love as in this case."
And with that word the arrows in the case 1500

[1] Queint — quenched. [2] Grace — favour. [3] Quaint — strange. [4] Quicked—revived. [5] Stint—stay. [6] Tho—those. [7] May not—am not able. [8] Henne—hence.

V. 1498. *Shall thee declaren.*] This is improper, as the fires *have* already *declared* the event of the combat. In the original, as I remember, the appearance of Diana is prior to the omen. —*Tyr.*

Of the goddess clatteren fast and ring,
And forth she went and made a vanishing,
For which this Emily astonied was,
And saidé, "What amounteth[1] this, alas!
I putté me in thy protectión 1505
Diane, and in thy dispositión."[2]
And home she go'th anon the nexté way.
This is the effect; there n'is no more to say.
The nexté hour of Mars follówing this
Arcite' unto the temple walkéd is 1510
Of fiercé Mars, to do his sacrifice
With all the rités of his pagan wise.[3]
With piteous[4] heart and high devotión
Right thus to Mars he said his orison:[5]
"O strongé god, that in the regnés[6] cold 1515
Of Thrace honóuréd art, and lord yhold,[7]
And hast in every regne and every land
Of armés all the bridle in thine hand,
And them fortúnést as thee list devise,
Accept of me my piteous sacrifice! 1520
If so be that my youthé may deserve,
And that my might[8] be worthy for to serve
Thy godhead, that I may be one of thine,
Then pray I thee to rue upon my pine,[9]
For thilké pain and thilké[10] hoté fire 1525
In which thou whilom brendest[11] for desire.

* * * *

For thilké sorrow that was then in thine heart
Have ruth as well upon my painés' smart.
"I am youngé and unconning[12] as thou wo'st,[13]
And, as I trow, with love offended most 1530
That ever was any livés creáture;[14]
For she that doth[15] me all this woe endure
Ne recketh never whether I sink or flete;[16]
And well I wot, or[17] she me mercy hete,[18]
I must with strengthé win her in the place; 1535
And well I wot withouten help or grace
Of thee ne may my strengthé not avail;
Then help me, Lord, to-morw' in my bataille,
For thilké fire that whilom burnéd thee,
As well as that this fire now burneth me, 1540

[1] What amounteth—what is the result of. [2] Disposition—disposal. [3] Wise — custom. [4] Piteous — imploring. [5] Orison — morning prayer. [6] Regnes — realms. [7] Yhold — for yholden. [8] Might—strength, ability. [9] Pine—sorrow. [10] Thilke—that same. [11] Brendest — burnedst. [12] Unconning — unknowing. [13] Wo'st, wottest—art aware. [14] Live's creature—the life of any creature. [15] Doth—maketh. [16] Flete—float. [17] Or—e'er, before. [18] Hete—promise.

And do, that I to-morrow may have victóry:
Mine be the travel and thiné be the glory.
Thy sovereign temple will I most honoúren
Of any place, and alway most laboúren
In thy plesánce and in thy craftés[1] strong; 1545
And in thy temple' I will my banner hong,
And all the armés of my company,
And evermore until the day I die
Eterné fire I will before thee find;
And eke to this avow I will me bind. 1550
My beard, my hair that hangeth long adown,
That never yet felt none offensión
Of razor ne of sheers I will thee give,
And be thy trué servant while I live.
Now, Lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore; 1555
Give me the victóry'; I axé thee no more."
The prayér stint of Arcita the strong,
The ringés on the temple door that hong,
And eke the doorés, clattereden full fast,
Of which Arcita somewhat him aghast. 1560
The firés burnt upon the altar bright
That it 'gan all the temple for to light;
A sweeté smell anon the ground up yaf,[2]
And Arcita anon his hand up haf,[3]
And more incénse into the fire he cast, 1565
With other rités more; and at the last,
The statue of Mars began his hauberk ring,
And with that sound he heard a murmuring
Full low and dim, that saidé thus, "Victóry;"
For which he gave to Mars honóur and glory. 1570
And thus with joy and hopé well to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inn is fare[4]
As fain as fowl is of the brighté sun.

* * * *

Great was the feast in Athens thilké day,
And eke the lusty[5] season of that May 1575
Made every wight to be in such pleasánce
That all that Monday jousten[6] they and dance,
And spenden it in Venus' high servíce;
But by the causé that they shoulden rise
Early a-morrow for to see the fight, 1580
Unto their resté wenten they at night.
And on the morrow when the day 'gan spring,
Of horse and harness noise and clattering

[1] Craft—manual art. [2] Yaf—gave. [3] Haf—raised. [4] Fare—(for) fared, gone. [5] Lusty—pleasant. [6] Jousten—exercise with the lance on horseback.

There was in the hostelries all about,
And to the palace rode there many a rout
Of lordés upon steedés and palfreys.
  There mayst thou see devising of harness
So uncouth and so rich, and wrought so wele
Of goldsmithry, of brouding[1] and of steel;
The shieldés brighté, testeres,[2] and trappúres,[3]
Gold-hewen helmés, hauberks, coat-armures;
Lordés in paréments[4] on their coursérs,
Knightés of retinue, and eke squiérs,
Nailing the spears, and helmés buckléing,
Gniding[5] of shields, with lainers[6] lacing;
There as need is they weren nothing idle:
The foamy steedés on the golden bridle
Gnawing, and fast the armourers also,
With file and hammer pricking[7] to and fro;
Yemen[8] on foot, and commons many one
With shorté stavés thick as they may gone;[9]
Pipés, trumpés, nakerés,[10] and clariounes,
That in the battle blowen bloody souns;
The palace full of people up and down,
Here three, there ten, holding their questióun,
Devining[11] of these Theban knightés two,
Some saiden thus, some said it shall be so;
Some helden with him with the blacké beard,
Some with the balléd, some with the thick hair'd
Some said he lookéd grim, and wouldé fight;
He hath a sparth[12] of twenty pound of weight.
  Thus was the hallé full of devining[11]
Long after that the sunné 'gan up spring.
The great Theséus that of his sleep is wakéd
With minstralcy and noisé that was makéd,
Held yet the chamber of his palace rich,
Till that the Theban knightés both ylich[13]
Honóuréd were, and to the palace fet.[14]
  Duke Theseus is at a window set,
Array'd right as he were a god in-throne:
The people presseth thitherward full soon
Him for to see and do high reverence,
And eke to hearken his hest[15] and his sentence.

[1] Brouding—embroidering. [2] Testeres—head pieces. [3] T
pures — horse-trappings. [4] Paréments — ornamental cloth
[5] Gniding — polishing, burnishing. [6] Lainers — thongs, b
[7] Pricking—riding hard. [8] Yemen—yeomen. [9] Thick as they
gone—as close together as they can walk. [10] Nakeres (Ital.
chere) — kettle drums. [11] Devining — guessing, conjectur
[12] Sparth—axe, or halbert. [13] Ylich — alike. [14] Fet — fetc
[15] Hest—command.

A herald on a scaffold made an O,
Till that the noisé of the people was ydo,[1] 1625
And when he saw the people of noise all still,
Thus shewéd he the mighty duké's will.
"The lord hath of his high discretión
Considered that it were destructión
To gentle blood to fighten in the guise[2] 1630
Of mortal battle now in this emprise,[3]
Wherefore to shapen that they shall not die
He will his firsté purpose modify.
"No man, therefóre, up pain of loss of life,
No manner shot[4] ne pollax nor short knife 1635
Into the listés send or thither bring,
Ne short sword for to stick with point biting
No man ne draw ne bear it by his side;
Ne no man shall unto his fellow ride
But one course with a sharp ygrounden spear; 1640
Foin[5] if him list on foot, himself to were:[6]
And he that is at mischief shall be take,[7]
And not slain, but be brought unto the stake
That shall be ordain'd on either side;
Thither he shall by force, and there abide: 1645
And if so fall the chiefétain be take[7]
On either side, or ellés slay'th his make,[8]
No longer shall the tourneying ylast.
God speedé you; go forth and lay on fast:
With long sword and with macé fight your fill. 1650
Go now your way; this is the lordés will."
The voice of the people touchéd to the heaven,
So loudé crieden they with merry steven,[9]
"God savé such a lord that is so good,
He willeth no destructión of blood." 1655
Up gone the trumpés and the melody,
And to the listés rit[10] the company
By ordinance, throughout the city large,
Hangéd with cloth of gold and not with serge.
Full like a lord this noble duke 'gan ride, 1660
And these two Thebans upon either side,

[1] Ydo—done, over. [2] Guise — manner, fashion. [3] Emprise—undertaking. [4] Shot — dart, arrow; any missile. [5] Foin—push, fence. [6] Were — defend. [7] Take — taken. [8] Make — fellow. [9] Steven—sound. [10] Rit—rideth.

V. 1624. *an O.*] It may be doubted whether this be an abbreviation of *oyez*, or whether the interjection *ho* were used to command a cessation of noise as well as of fighting, &c. For the latter use see ver. 848, 1747, and *Holinsh.* p. 495:—"The Duke of Norfolke was not fullie set forward when the king cast downe his warder, and the heraldes cried, *Ho, ho!*"—*Tyr.*

And after rode the queen and Emily,
And after that another company
Of one and other after their degree;
And thus they passen throughout the citee, 1665
And to the listés comen they by time:
It n'as[1] not of the day yet fully prime.[2]
When set was Theseus full rich and high,
Hypolita the queen, and Emily,
And other ladies in degrees about, 1670
Unto the seátés presseth all the rout.
And westward through the gatés under Mart[3]
Arcité, 'and eke the hundred of his part,
With banner red, is enter'd right anon;
And in the selvé[4] moment Palamon 1675
Is, under Venus, eastward in the place,
With banner white, and hardy cheer[5] and face.
In all the world to seeken up and down,
So even without variatión
There n'ere[6] such companiés never tway;[7] 1680
For there was none so wise that couldé say
That any had of other ávantage
Of worthiness, ne of estate ne age,
So even were they chosen for to guess:
And in two rangés fairé they them dress. 1685
When that their namés read were evereach one,
That in their number guilé[8] were there none,
Then were the gatés shut, and cried was loud,
Do now your dévoir,[9] youngé knightés proud.
The heralds left their pricking[10] up and down. 1690
Now ringén trumpés loud and clarioun.
There is no more to say, but east and west
In gone the spearés sadly in the rest;
In go'th the sharpé spur into the side:
There see men who can joust and who can ride: 1695
There shiveren shaftés upon shieldés thick;
He feeleth through the hearté-spoon[11] the prick:[12]

[1] N'as—was not. [2] Prime—first quarter of the day. [3] Mart—Mars. [4] Selve—self-same. [5] Cheer—look. [6] N'ere—were not. [7] Tway—two. [8] Guile—unfairness. [9] Devoir—duty. [10] Pricking—riding. [11] Heart-spoon—*see note.* [12] Prick—thrust, stab.

V. 1697. *the heart-spoon.*] This part of the human body is not mentioned in any dictionary that I have seen. The following passage of Jonson (*Sad Shepherd*, A. i. S. vi.) would incline one to suspect that it means the concave part of the breast, where the lower ribs unite with the *cartilago ensiformis;*

"—— he that undoes *him*, (the deer)
Doth cleave the brisket bone, upon the *spoon*
Of which a little gristle grows——"

Up springen spearés twenty foot on height;
Out gone the swordés as the silver bright:
The helmés they to-hewen and to-shred; 1700
Out burst the blood with sterné streamés red:
With mighty maces the bonés they to-brest;[1]
He through the thickest of the throng 'gan threst:
There stumblen steedés strong, and down go'th all;
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball: 1705
He foineth[2] on his foe with truncheón,
And he him hurtleth[3] with his horse adown:
He through the body' is hurt, and sith ytake[4]
Maugre[5] his head, and brought unto the stake,
As foreword[6] was, right there he must abide; 1710
Another led is on that other side:
And sometime doth[7] them Theseus to rest,
Them to refresh and drinken if them lest.[8]
Full oft a day have thilké Thebans two
Together met and wrought each other woe: 1715
Unhorséd hath each other of them tway.
There n'as no tiger in the vale of Galaphay,
When that her whelp is stole when it is lite,[9]
So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
For jealous heart upon this Palamon; 1720
Ne in Belmárie there n'is[10] so fell lión
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood[11]
Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to slay his foe Arcite:
The jealous strokés on their helmés bite; 1725
Out runneth blood on both their sidés rede.[12]
Sometime an end there is of every deed;
For ere the sun unto the resté went
The strongé King Emetrius 'gan hent[13]
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite, 1730
And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite;

[1] To-brest—burst. [2] Foineth—lasheth. [3] Hurtleth—pusheth. [4] Sith ytake—afterwards taken. [5] Maugre—in spite of. [6] Foreword—agreement beforehand. [7] Doth—maketh. [8] Lest—desire. [9] Lite—small. [10] N'is—is not. [11] Wood—mad, raging. [12] Rede—red. [13] 'Gan hent—began to seize.

The *Gloss.* supposes *spoon* to be a participle, signifying thrust, driven, pusht, from the Ital. *spingere.*—*Tyr.*

V. 1717. *the vale of Galaphay.*] This word is variously written, Colaphey, Galgaphey, Galapey. There was a town called Galapha in Mauritania Tingitana, upon the river Malva, (*Cellar. Geog. Ant.* v. ii. p. 935.) which perhaps may have given name to the vale here meant. For *Belmarie*, ver. 1721, see the note on ver. 57, *Prologue.*—*Tyr.*

And by the force of twenty is he take[1]
Unyielden, and ydrawen to the stake :
And in the rescue of this Palamon
The strongé King Licurge is borne adown ; 1735
And King Emetrius, for all his strength,
Is borne out of his saddle' a swordés length,
So hit him Palamon e'er he were take :[1]
But all for naught, he was brought to the stake :
His hardy hearté might him helpen naught ; 1740
He must abiden when that he was caught
By force, and eke by compositión.
Who sorroweth now but woful Palamon,
That musté no more go again to fight ?
And when that Theseus had seen that sight 1745
Unto the folk that foughten thus each one
He criéd, " Ho ! no more, for it is done,
I will be trué judge and not partý,
Arcite' of Thebés shall have Emily,
That by his fortune hath her fair ywon." 1750
Anon there is a noise of people begun
For joy of this, so loud and high withal,
It seeméd that the listés shoulden fall.
What can now fairé Venus do above ?
What saith she now ? what doth this queen of Love,
But weepeth so, for wanting of her will, 1756
Till that her terés in the listés fell :
She said, " I am ashaméd doubtéless."
Saturnus saidé, " Daughter, hold thy peace :
Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his boon, 1760
And by mine head thou shalt be easéd soon."
The trompours with the loudé minstralcy,
The heralds, that so loudé yell and cry,
Been in their joy for wele of Dan Arcite.
But hearkeneth me, and stinteth[2] noise a lite, 1765
Which[3] a mirácle there befell anon.
This fierce Arcite' hath off his helm ydone,
And on a courser for to show his face
He pricketh endélong[4] the largé place,
Looking upwárd upon this Emily, 1770
And she again him cast a friendly eye,

[1] Take—taken. [2] Stinteth, old imperative—stint, cease. [3] Which—what. *See note below.* [4] Pricketh endelong—rideth from one end to the other.

V. 1766. *Which a miracle.*] It is scarce necessary to observe that *which*, in our ancient language, was often used for who and what. It is used for what here, and on various other occasions.—*Tyr.*

(For women, as to speaken in commúne,
They follow all the favour of Fortúne)
And was all his in cheer[1] as his in heart.
Out of the ground a Fury' infernal start, 1775
From Pluto sent, at réquest of Saturn,
For which his horse for fear began to turn,
And leap'd aside, and foundred as he leap ;[2]
And ere that Arcite may také any keep[3]
He pight[4] him on the pummel[5] of his head, 1780
That in the place he lay as he were dead,
His breast to-bursten with his saddle bow ;
As black he lay as any coal or crow,
So was the blood yrunnen in his face.
Anon he was yborne out of the place, 1785
With hearté sore, to Theseus' paláce :
Then was he carven[6] out of his harness,
And in a bed ybrought full fair and blive,[7]
For he was yet in memory and live,
As always crying after Emily. 1790
Duke Theseus with all his company
Is comen home to Athens his city
With allé bliss and great solemnity,
Al-be-it that this áventure was fall
He n'oldé[8] not discomforten them all. 1795
Men saiden eke that Arcite shall not die,
He shall be healéd of his malady.
And of another thing they were as fain,[9]
That of them allé was there none yslain,
All[10] were they sore yhurt, and namely one, 1800
That with a spear was thirléd[11] his breast bone.
To other woundés and to broken arms
Some hadden salvés and some hadden charms;
And pharmacies of herbés, and eke save[12]
They dranken for they would their livés have: 1805
For which this noble duke, as he well can,
Comfórteth and honóureth every man,
And madé revel all the longé night
Unto the strangé lordés, as was right.
Ne there n'as holden no discomforting 1810
But as at joustés or a tourneying ;
For sothly[13] there n'as[14] no discomfiture ;
For falling n'is not but an áventure :

[1] Cheer—countenance, behaviour. [2] Leap—(for) leaped. [3] Keep—care. [4] Pight—pitched. [5] Pummel (Fr. *pomel*)—top of the head. [6] Carven—cut. [7] Fair and blive—softly and quickly. [8] N'olde—would not. [9] Fain—glad. [10] All—although. [11] Thirled—pierced. [12] Save—sage (the herb). [13] Sothly—truly. [14] N'as—was not.

Ne to be led by force unto a stake
Unyielden, and with twenty knightés take,[1] 1815
One person all alone, withouten mo,
And hurried forth by armés, foot, and toe,
And eke his steedé driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothé yemen and eke knaves,
It was aretted[2] him no villainy[3] 1820
There may no man clepen[4] it cowárd'y.[5]
For which anon Duke Theseus let cry,
To stenten[6] allé rancour and envý,
The gree[7] as well of one side as of other,
And either side' ylike, as other's brother; 1825
And gave them giftés after their degree,
And held a feasté fully dayés three;
And cónveyéd the kingés worthily
Out of his town a journey largély;[8]
And home went every man the righté way; 1830
There n'as[9] no more but, "Farewell, Have good day."
Of this batáille I will no more indite,
But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the breast of Arcite, and the sore
Encreaseth at his hearté more and more. 1835
The clottered blood for any leché-craft[10]
Corrupteth, and is in his bouke'[11] ylaft,
That neither veiné-blood ne ventousing,[12]
Ne drink of herbés may be his helping.
The virtue expulsíve or animal, 1840
From thilké virtue clepéd[13] natural,
Ne may the venom voiden ne expell;
The pipés of his lungés 'gan to swell,
And every lacert[14] in his breast adown
Is shent[15] with venom and corruptión. 1845
He gaineth neither,[16] for to get his life,
Vomit upwárd ne downward laxative:
All is to-bursten thilké región;
Nature hath now no dominatión:
And certainly where nature will not werche,[17] 1850
Farewell physíc; go bear the man to church.

[1] Take—taken. [2] Aretted—imputed to him. [3] Villainy—ill-breeding, unworthy a gentleman. [4] Clepen—call. [5] Coward'y—cowardice. [6] Stenten—stay. [7] Gree—prize, honour of the day. [8] Journey largely—a full day's journey. [9] N'as—was not. [10] Leche-craft—surgical skill. [11] Bouke—body. [12] Ventousing, (Fr.)—cupping: hence the term "*breathing* a vein." [13] Cleped—called. [14] Lacert—muscle. *See note below.* [15] Shent—ruined, destroyed. [16] Gaineth neither—he is able to, or can, procure neither, &c. [17] Werche—work.

V. 1844. *lacert.*] A fleshy muscle, so called from its being in shape like a lizard. Lat. *lacerta.—Gloss.*

This is all and some, that Arcite musté die;
For which he sendeth after Emily,
And Palamon, that was his cousin dear;
Then said he thus, as ye shall after hear. 1855
"Naught may the woful spirit in mine heart
Declare one point of all my sorrows' smart
To you my lady, that I lové most,
But I bequeath the service of my ghost
To you abovén every creáture, 1860
Since that my life ne may no longer dure.
"Alas the woe! alas the painés strong,
That I for you have suffered, and so long!
Alas the death! alas mine Emily!
Alas departing of our company! 1865
Alas mine hearté's queen! alas my wife!
Mine hearté's lady, ender of my life!
What is this world?—what asken men to have?
Now with his love, now in his coldé grave—
Alone,—withouten any company. 1870
Farewell my sweet,—Farewell mine Emily!
And softé take me in your armés tway
For love of God, and hearkeneth what I say.
"I have here with my cousin Palamon
Had strife and rancour many a day agone 1875
For love of you, and for my jealousy;
And Jupiter so wis[1] my soulé gie,[2]
To speaken of a servant properly,
With allé circumstances truély,
That is to say, truth, honour, and knighthead, 1880
Wisdom, humbless, estate, and high kindred,
Freedom, and all that 'longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soulé part,
As in this world right now ne know I none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon, 1885
That serveth you, and will do all his life;
And if that ever ye shall be a wife
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man."
And with that word his speeché fail began;
For from his feet up to his breast was come 1890
The cold of death that had him overnome;[3]
And yet moreover in his armés two
The vital strength is lost and all ago;[4]
Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelléd in his hearté sick and sore, 1895
'Gan faillen when the hearté felté death;
Duskéd his eyen two, and fail'd his breath:

[1] Wis—surely. [2] Gie—guide. [3] Overnome—overtaken. [4] Ago—agone.

But on his lady yet cast he his eye;
His lasté word was, "Mercy, Emily!"
His spirit changéd house, and wenté there, 1900
As I came never, I cannot tellen where;
Therefore I·stent,[1] I'm no divínister;
Of soulés find I not in this regíster:
Ne me lust[2] not th' opinións to tell
Of them, though that they writen where they dwell.
Arcite is cold, there[3] Mars his soulé gie.[4] 1906
Now will I speaken forth of Emily.
Shriek'd Emily, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his sister took anon
Swooning, and bare her from the corpse away. 1910
What helpeth it to tarrien forth the day,
To tellen how she wept both ev'n and morrow?
For in such casé women have such sorrow,
When that their husbands been from them ago,[5]
That for the moré part they sorrowing so, 1915
Or ellés fallen in such malady,
That atté lasté certainly they die.
Infínite were the sorrows and the tears
Of oldé folk and folk of tender years
In all the town, for death of this Theban; 1920
For him there weepeth bothé child and man:
So great a weeping was there none certáin
When Hector was ybrought all fresh yslain
To Troy: alas! the pity that was there;
Cratching of cheekés, rending eke of hair. 1925
"Why wouldest thou be dead?" these women cry,
"And haddest gold enough and Emily."
No man might gladden this Duke Theseus
Saving his oldé father Egeus,
That knew this worldés transmutatión, 1930
As he had seen it changen up and down,
Joy after woe, and woe after gladness,
And showéd him example and likeness.
"Right as there diéd never man (quod he)
That he ne liv'd in earth in some degree, 1935
Right so there livéd never man (he said)
In all this world that sometime he ne died:
This world n'is but a throughfare full of woe,
And we be pilgrims passing to and fro:
Death is an end of every worldés sore:" 1940
And o'er all this, yet said he muchel more
To this effect, full wisely to exhort
The people that they should them recomfort.

[1] Stent—stop. [2] Me lust not—it is not my pleasure. [3] There—where. [4] Gie—guide. [5] Ago—agone.

Duke Theseus with all his busy cure
He casteth now where that the sepulture 1945
Of good Arcite may best ymakéd be,
And eke most honourable in his degree;
And at the last he took conclusión
That there as first Arcite' and Palamon
Hadden for love the battle them between, 1950
That in that selvé[1] grové, sote[2] and green,
There as he had his amorous desires,
His cómplaint, and for love his hoté fires,
He wouldé make a fire, in which th' office
Of funeral he might all áccomplise; 1955
And let anon command to hack and hew
The oakés old, and lay them on a rew
In culpons,[3] well arrayéd for to brenne.[4]
His officers with swifté feet they renne
And ride anon at his commandément. 1960
And after this, Theséus hath ysent
After a bier, and it all overspread
With cloth of gold the richest that he had,
And of the samé suit he clad Arcite.
Upon his handés were his glovés white, 1965
Eke on his head a crown of laurel green,
And in his hand a sword full bright and keen.
He laid him bare the visage on the bier,
Therewith he wept that pity was to hear;
And, for the people shouldé see him all, 1970
When it was day he brought him to the hall,
That roareth of the crying and the soun.
Then came this woful Theban, Palamon,
With floatery[5] beard and ruggy ashy hairs,
In clothés black, ydropped all with tears, 1975
And (passing over of weeping Emily)
The ruefullest of all the company.
And in as much as the servíce should be
The moré noble' and rich in his degree,
Duke Theseus let forth three steedés bring, 1980
That trapped were in steel all glittering,
And covered with the arms of Dan Arcite;
And eke upon these steedés great and white
There satten folk, of which one bare his shield,
Another his spear up in his handés held; 1985
The thirdé bare with him his bow Turkéis,
Of burnt gold was the case and the harness;
And ridden forth a pace with sorrowful cheer
Towárd the grove, as ye shall after hear.

[1] Selve—same. [2] Sote—sweet. [3] Culpons—logs. [4] Brenne—burn. [5] Floatery—floating.

The noblest of the Greekés that there were 1990
Upon their shoulders carrieden the bier,
With slacké pace, and eyen red and wet,
Throughout the city, by the master street,
That spread was all with black, and wonder high
Right of the same is all the street ywrie.[1] 1995
Upon the right hand went old Egeus,
And on that other side Duke Theseus,
With vessels in their hand of gold full fine,
All full of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon with full great company, 2000
And after that came woful Emily
With fire in hand, as was that time the guise,
To do the' office of funeral service.
High labour and full great apparelling
Was at the service of that fire making, 2005
That with his greené top the heaven raught,[2]
And twenty fathom of breadth the armés straught;[3]
This is to sain, the boughés were so broad.
Of straw first there was layéd many a load.
But how the fire was makéd up on height, 2010
And eke the namés how the treés hight,
As oak, fir, birch, aspe, alder, holm, poplére,
Willow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestein, lind, laurere,
Maple, thorn, beech, hasel, yew, whipultree,[4]
How they were fell'd, shall not be told for me; 2015
Ne how the goddés rannen up and down
Disherited of their habitatión,
In which they wonnéden in rest and peace,
Nymphés, Faunés, and Hamadriadés;
Ne how the beastés and the birdés all 2020
Fledden for fearé when the wood 'gan fall;
Ne how the ground aghast was of the light,
That was not wont to see the sunné bright;
Ne how the fire was couchéd[5] first with stre,[6]
And then with drié stickés cloven a-three, 2025
And then with greené wood and spicery,
And then with cloth of gold and with pierrie,[7]
And garlands hanging with full many a flow'r
The myrrh, th' encénse also with sweet odóur;
Ne how Arcita lay among all this, 2030
Ne what richéss about his body is;

[1] Ywrie—covered. [2] Raught—reached. [3] Straught—stretched. [4] Whipultree—qy. whiffletree—the bar to which the traces or tugs of a harness are fastened. (*Webster.*) [5] Couched—laid. [6] Stre—straw. [7] Pierrie—precious stones.

V. 1993. *the master street.*] The principal street: "Le souverain carrefour." *Froissart*, v. iv. c. 28.—*Tyr.*

Ne how that Emily, as was the guise,
Put in the fire of funeral servíce;
Ne how she swoonéd when she made the fire,
Ne what she spake, ne what was her desire; 2035
Ne what jewéllés men in the firé cast,
When that the fire was great and brenté fast;
Ne how some cast their shield and some their spear,
And of their vestimentés which they ware,[1]
And cuppés full of wine, and milk, and blood, 2040
Into the fire, that burnt as it were wood;[2]
Ne how the Greekés with a hugé rout
Three timés ridden all the fire about
Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting,
And thricé with their spearés clattering, 2045
And thricé how the ladies 'gan to cry;
Ne how that led was homeward Emily;
Ne how Arcite' is burnt to ashes cold;
Ne how the liké-waké[3] was yhold
All thilké night; ne how the Greekés play; 2050
The waké-plays ne keep[4] I not to say;
Who wrestled best naked, with oil anoint,
Ne who that bare him best in no disjoint:[5]
I will not tellen eke how they all gone
Home to Athenés when the play is done, 2055
But shortly to the point now will I wend,[6]
And maken of my longé Tale an end.
By process and by length of certain years
All stenten[7] is the mourning and the tears
Of Greekés by one general assent: 2060
Then seemeth me there was a parlément
At Athens upon certain points and case;[8]
Amongés the which points yspoken was
To have with certain countries álliance,
And have of Thebans fully' obeisance: 2065
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let senden after gentle Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why:
But in his blacké clothés sorrowfully

[1] Ware, (for weared)—wore. [2] Wood—furiously mad. [3] Like-wake—*see note*. [4] Keep — tarry, delay. [5] Disjoint — difficulty, disadvantage. [6] Wend—proceed. [7] Stenten—stopped. [8] Case, (for cases)—circumstances.

V. 2049. *the like-wake.*] The custom of watching with dead bodies (*lice*, Sax.) is probably very ancient in this country. It was abused, as other wakes and vigils were. Chaucer seems to have confounded the wake-plays (as they were called) of his own time with the funeral-games of the ancients.—*Tyr*.

He came at his commandément on high; 2070
Then senté Theseus for Emily.
When they were set, and hush'd was all the place,
And Theseus abiden hath a space,
Or any word came from his wisé breast
His eyen set he there[1] as was his lest,[2] 2075
And with a sad viságe he siked[3] still,
And after that, right thus he said his will.
"The firsté Mover of the cause above,
When he first made the fairé chain of love,
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent; 2080
Well wist he why and what thereof he meant;
For with that fairé chain of love he bound
The fire, the air, the water, and the lond,
In certain bondés, that they may not flee:
That samé prince and Mover eke (quod he) 2085
Hath stablish'd in this wretched world adown,
Certain of dayés and duratión
To all that are engendred in this place,
Over the which day they ne may not pace,
Al may they yet the dayés well abridge. 2090
There needeth none authority alledge,
For it is provéd by experience,
But that me lust declaren my sentence.
Then may men by this order well discern
That thilké Mover stable' is and etern; 2095
Well may men knowén, but it be a fool,
That every part deriveth from its whole,
For Nature hath not taken its beginning
Of no party ne cantle[4] of a thing,
But of a thing that perfect is and stable, 2100
Descending so till it be corrumpable;
And therefore of his wisé púrveyance
He hath so well beset his ordinance,
That species of thingés and progressións
Shallen enduren by successións, 2105
And not etern, withouten any lie;
This mayst thou understand and see at eye.
Lo th' oak, that hath so long a nourishing
From timé that it 'ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a life, as ye may see, 2110
Yet at the lasté wasted is the tree.
Considereth eke how that the hardé stone
Under our feet, on which we tread and gone,
It wasteth as it lieth by the way;
The broadé river sometime waxeth dry; 2115

[1] There—where. [2] Lest—pleasure. [3] Siked—sighed. [4] Cantle – fragment.

The greaté townés see we wane and wend;[1]
Then may ye see that all thing hath an end.
Of man and woman see we well also,
That needés in one of the termés two,
That is to sayn, in youth or ellés age, 2120
He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
Some in his bed, some in the deepé sea,
Some in the largé field, as ye may see:
There helpeth naught, all go'th that ilké[2] way;
Then may I say that allé thing must die. 2125
What maketh this but Jupiter the King,
The which is prince and cause of allé thing,
Converting all unto his proper will,
From which it is derivéd, soth to tell?
And here-against no creáture on live 2130
Of no degree availeth for to strive.
Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken virtue of necessity,
And take it well that we may not eschew,[3]
And namély that to us all is due; 2135
And whoso grutcheth aught, he doth follý,
And rebel is to him that all may gie.[4]
And certainly a man hath most honóur
To dien in his excellence and flow'r,
When he is siker[5] of his goodé name; 2140
Then hath he done his friend ne him no shame;
And gladder ought his friend be of his death,
When with honóur is yielden up his breath,
Than when his name appalled[6] is for age,
For all forgotten is his vassalage:[7] 2145
Then is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dien when a man is best of name.
The contrary' of all this, is wilfulness.
Why grutchen we? why have we heaviness,
That good Arcite', of chivalry the flow'r, 2150
Departed is, with duty and honóur,
Out of this foulé prison of this life?
Why grutchen here his cousin and his wife
Of his welfáre, that loven him so well?
Can he them thank? nay, God wot, never a deal,[8]
That both his soul and eke themselves offend, 2156
And yet they mow[9] their lustés[10] not amend.

[1] Wend—proceed, increase. [2] Ilke—same. [3] Eschew—avoid, shun. [4] May gie—can direct. [5] Siker—sure. [6] Appalled—made pale. [7] Vassalage—good service, valour, prowess. So Froissart. [8] Never a deal—not a whit. [9] Mow—are able. [10] Lustes—desires, gratifications.

"What may I cónclude of this long serie,[1]
But after sorrow I rede[2] us to be merry,
And thanken Jupiter of all his grace, 2160
And ere that we departen from this place,
I redé that we make of sorrows two,
One perfect joyé lasting evermo:
And look now, where most sorrow is herein,
There will I first amenden and begin. 2165
"Sister, (quod he) this is my full assent,
With all th' advice here of my parlément,
That gentle Palamon, your owén knight,
That serveth you with will, and heart, and might,
And ever hath done since ye first him knew, 2170
That ye shall of your grace upon him rue,
And taken him for husband and for lord:
Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.
"Let see now of your womanly pity;
He is a kingés brother's son pardie, 2175
And though he were a pooré bacheler,
Since he hath servéd you so many' a year,
And had for you so great adversity,
It musté be consider'd, 'lieveth me,[3]
For gentle mercy oweth[4] to passen right." 2180
Then said he thus to Palamon the Knight:
"I trow there needeth little sermoning
To maken you assenten to this thing.
Come near, and take your lady by the hond."
Betwixen them was made anon the bond 2185
That highté Matrimony' or Marriáge,
By all the counsel of the baronage;
And thus with allé bliss and melody
Hath Palamon ywedded Emily;
And God, that all this widé world hath wrought, 2190
Send him his love that hath it dear ybought.
For now is Palamon in allé weal
Living in bliss, in richess, and in heal,[5]
And Emily him loveth so tenderly,
And he her serveth all so gentilly, 2195
That never was there no word them between
Of jealousy, ne of none other teen.[6]
Thus endeth Palamon and Emily,
And God save all this fairé company.

[1] Serie—series. [2] Rede—advise. [3] 'Lieveth me—believe me. [4] Oweth—is due. [5] Heal—health. [6] Teen—sorrow, affliction.

THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

OUR Hosté saw well that the brighté sun
Th' arc of his artificial day had run
The fourthé part a half an hour and more;
And though he were not deep expert in lore
He wist it was the eight-and-twenty day 5
Of April, that is messenger to May,
And saw well that the shadow' of every tree
Was as in length of the same quantity
That was the body erect that caused it,
And therefore by the shadow he took his wit 10
That Phœbus, which that shone so clear and bright,
Degrees was five-and-forty clomb on height;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clock he 'gan conclude,
And suddenly he plight[1] his horse about. 15
"Lordings, quod he, I warn you all this rout
The fourthé partie of this day is gone:
Now for the love of God and of Saint John
Loseth no time, as farforth as ye may.
Lordings, the time it wasteth night and day, 20
And stealeth from us, what privily sleeping,
And what through negligence in our waking,
As doth the stream, that turneth never again,
Descending from the mountain into a plain.
Well can Senec' and many' a philosópher 25
Bewailen timé more than gold in coffer;
For loss of cattle may recovered be,
But loss of timé shendeth[2] us, quod he.
It will not come again withouten drede,[3]
* * * *
Let us not moulden thus in idleness. 30
"Sir Man of Law, quod he, so have ye bliss,
Tell us a Tale anon, as foreword[4] is.
Ye be submitted through your free assent
To stand in this case at my judgément.

[1] Plight — pulled. [2] Shendeth — ruineth. [3] Drede — doubt.
[4] Foreword—agreement.

Acquitteth you now, and holdeth your behest;[1] 35
Then have ye done your devoir at the least."
"Hosté, quod he, *de par dieux jeo assente*,
To breaken foreword is not mine intent.
Behest[1] is debt, and I would hold it fain
All my behest, I can no better sain. 40
For such law as man giveth another wight
He should himselven usen it by right.
Thus will our text; but nathéless, certain
I can right now no thrifty Talé sain,
But Chaucer (though he can but lewédly[2] 45
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath said them in such English as he can
Of oldé time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not said them, levé[3] brother,
In one book, he hath said them in another: 50
For he hath told of lovers up and down,
More than Ovidé made of mentión
In his *Epistolis*, that be full old.
What should I tellen them since they been told?
In youth he made of Ceyx and Alcyon, 55
And sithen[4] hath he spoke of evereach one
These noble wivés, and these lovers eke,
Whoso that will his largé volume seek,
Clepéd[5] The Saintés Legend of Cupíd:
There may he see the largé woundés wide 60
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbe;
The sword of Dido for the false Enée;
The tree of Phillis for her Démophon;
The plaint of Dejanir' and Hermion,
Of Ariadné, and Hypsipylé; 65
The barren islé standing in the sea;
The drent[6] Leander for his fair Hero;
The tearés of Helene, and eke the woe
Of Bríseis and of Laodamía;
The cruelty of thee, Queen Medea, 70
Thy little children hanging by the halse[7]
For thy Jason, that was of love so false:
O Hypermnestra, Pénelope', Alcesté!
Your wifehood he commendeth with the besté.
"But certainly no word ne writeth he 75
Of thilké wicke' exampl' of Canacé,
That lov'd her owén brother sinfully;
(Of all such cursed stories I say, Fy,)
Or else of Tyrius Appolonius,
* * * *

[1] Behest — promise. [2] Lewedly — ignorantly. [3] Leve — dear. [4] Sithen—since, since then. [5] Cleped—called. [6] Drent—drowned. [7] Halse—neck.

And therefore he of full avisément 80
N'old[1] never write in none of his sermons
Of such unkind[2] abominatións :
Ne I will not rehearse, if that I may ;
But of my Tale how shall I do this day?
Me were loth to be likenéd doubtéless 85
To Muses that men clepe Piéridés,
(*Metamorphoseos* wot what I mean)
But nathéless I recké not a bean
Though I come after him with hawbake ;[3]
I speak in prose, and let him rimés make." 90
And with that word he with a sober cheer[4]
Began his Tale, and said as ye shall hear.

[1] N'old—would not. [2] Unkind—unnatural. [3] Hawbake.—The term "*hawbuck*," which means an awkward lout, is not an uncommon provincialism to this day. [4] Cheer—countenance.

" And Custance with a deadly palé face
The fourthé day towárd the ship she went ;
* * * and kneeling on the strond
She saidé, 'Lord ! aye welcome be thy sond.' "—l. 802.

THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.

O SCATHEFUL[1] harm, conditión of poverty,
With thirst, with cold, with hunger, so confounded,
To asken help thee shameth in thine hearté, 95
If thou none ask, so sore art thou ywounded,
That very need unwrappeth all thy wound hid.
Maugre[2] thine head, thou must, for indigence
Or steal or beg, or borrow thy dispense.[3]
Thou blamest Christ, and say'st full bitterly, 100
He misdeparteth[4] riches temporal ;

[1] Scatheful—pernicious. [2] Maugre—in spite of. [3] Dispense—expense. [4] Misdeparteth—unequally distributeth.

The Man of Law's Tale.] Lady Custance, the Emperor's daughter of Rome, after her marriage with the Soudan of Surrie, through the malice of the Soudan's mother suffereth great trouble and misery with her young child Maurice, but yet in the end is restored to comfort.—*Urry.*

Thy neighébour thou wittest [1] sinfully,
And say'st thou hast too little' and he hath all :
" Parfay (say'st thou) sometime he reckon shall,
When that his tail shall brennen [2] in the glede,[3] 105
For he naught helpeth needful in their need."
Hearken what is the sentence of the wise,
Bet [4] is to dien than have indigence,
Thy selvé neighébour will thee despise ;
If thou be poor farewell thy reverence. 110
Yet of the wisé man take this sentence,
Allé the days of pooré men be wick ; [5]
Beware therefore ere thou come to that prick.[6]
If thou be poor thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy friendés flee from thee, alas ! 115
O riché merchants ! full of weal [7] be ye,
O noble', O prudent folk ! as in this case,
Your baggés be not filled with ambes ace [8]
But with sise [9] cinque, that runneth for your chance ;
At Christenmas merry may ye dance. 120
Ye seeken land and sea for your winnings ;
As wisé folk ye knowen all th' estate
Of regnés ; [10] ye be fathers of tidings
And talés both of peace and of debate :
I were right now of talés desolate, 125
N'ere [11] that a merchant, gone is many a year,
Me taught a Talé which that ye shall hear.
In Surrie [12] whilome dwelt a company
Of chapmen [13] rich, and thereto sad [14] and true,
That widé were senten their spicery, 130
Clothés of gold, and satins rich of hue :
Their chaffare [15] was so thrifty [16] and so new,
That every wight hath dainty to chaffare [17]
With them, and eke to sellen them their ware.
Now fell it that the masters of that sort 135
Had shapen [18] them to Romé for to wend,[19]
Were it for chapmanhood [20] or for disport,
No other message would they thither send,
But come themselves to Rome, this is the end ;
And in such place as thought them ávantage 140
For their intent they take their herbergage.[21]

[1] Wittest — blamest. [2] Brennen — burn. [3] Glede — fire (everlasting). [4] Bet—better. [5] Wick—wicked. [6] Prick—point. [7] Weal —wealth. [8] Ambes ace—two aces at dice : Fr. [9] Sise cinque—six five. [10] Regnes—kingdoms. [11] N'ere—were it not. [12] Surrie—Syria. [13] Chapmen — dealers, traders. [14] Sad — grave, steady. [15] Chaffare—merchandise. [16] Thrifty—cheap, frugal, marketable. [17] Hath dainty to chaffare—values highly to deal. [18] Shapen—prepared themselves. [19] Wend — proceed. [20] Chapmanhood — trading. [21] Herbergage—asylum.

Sojóurnéd had these merchants in that town
A certain time, às fell to their pleasance :
And so befell that th' excellent renown
Of th' emperorés daughter, Dame Custance, 45
Reported was with every circumstance
Unto these Surrian merchants in such wise
From day to day as I shall you devise.
This was the common voice of every man :
"Our emperor of Romé, God him see,[1] 150
A daughter hath that since the world began,
To reckon as well her goodness as beauty,
N'as[2] never such another as is she ;
I pray to God in honour her sustain,
And would she were of all Europe the queen. 155
"In her is high beauty withouten pride,
Youthé withouten grenched[3] or folly :
To all her workés virtue is her guide ;
Humbless hath slaién in her tyranny :
She is mirróur of allé courtesy, 160
Her heart is very chamber of holiness,
Her hand minister of freedom for almess."[4]
And all this voice was soth,[5] as God is true ;
But now to purpose let us turn again.
These merchants have done fraught[6] their shippés new,
And when they have this blissful maiden seen, 166
Homé to Surrie been they went full fain,
And done their needés,[7] as they have done yore,[8]
And liven in weal ;[9] I can say you no more.
Now fell it that these merchants stood in grace 170
Of him that was the Soudan[10] of Surrie ;
For when they came from any strangé place,
He would of his benigné courtesy
Make them good cheer, and busily espy
Tidings of sundry regnés,[11] for to lere[12] 175
The wonders that they mighté seen or hear.
Amongés other thingés specially
These merchants have him told of Dame Custance
So great nobléss, in earnest seriously,
That this Soudan hath caught so great pleasance 180
To have her figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust[13] and all his busy cure[14]
Was for to love her while his life may dure.

[1] God him see—God preserve him in his sight. [2] N'as—was not. [3] Grenched—childishness. [4] Almess—alms-deeds. [5] Soth—true. [6] Done fraught—freighted, or caused to be freighted. [7] Done their needes—transacted their business. [8] Yore—in time past. [9] Weal—prosperity. [10] Soudan—Soldan, Sultan. [11] Regnes—kingdoms. [12] Lere—learn. [13] Lust—desire. [14] Cure—care.

Paráventure in thilké largé book
Which that men clepe the Heaven, ywritten was 185
With starrés when that he his birthé took,
That he for love should have his death, alas!
For in the starrés, clearer than is glass,
Is written, God wot, who so could it read,
The death of every man withouten drede.[1] 190
In starrés many a winter therebeforn
Was writ the death of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, ere they were born;
The strife of Thebés, and of Hercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates 195
The death; but mennés wittés be so dull
That no wight can well read it at the full.
This Soudan for his privé council sent,
And shortly of this matter for to pace,[2]
He hath to them declaréd his intent, 200
And said them certain, but he might have grace[3]
To have Custance, within a little space
He n'as[4] but dead, and charged them in high,[5]
To shapen for his life some remedy.
Diversé men diversé thingés saiden; 205
They argumentés casten up and down;
Many a subtle reason forth they laiden;
They speaken of magic and abusión;[6]
But finally, as in conclusión,
They cannot see in that none ávantage, 210
Ne in none other way save marriáge.
Then saw they therein such difficulty
By way of reason, for to speak all plain,
Becausé there was such diversity
Between their bothé lawés, that they sain 215
They trowen[7] that no Christian prince would fain[8]
Wedden his child under our lawé sweet,
That us was giv'n by Mahound[9] our prophéte.
And he answeréd; "Rather than I lese[10]
Custánce, I will be christened doubtéless: 220
I must be her's, I may none other chese,[11]
I pray you hold your arguments in peace;
Saveth my life, and beth not reckéless
To getten her that hath my life in cure,[12]
For in this woe I may not long endure." 225

[1] Drede — doubt. [2] Pace — pass, quit. [3] But he might have grace—unless he could have the favour. [4] N'as—was not. [5] In high — upon his sovereignty. [6] Abusion — abuse, impropriety. [7] Trowen — believe. [8] Fain — gladly. [9] Mahound — Mahomet. [10] Lese—lose. [11] Chese—choose. [12] Cure—keeping, care.

What needeth greater dilatatión?
I say by treatise and ambassadry,
And by the Popés mediatión,
And all the church, and all the chivalry,
That in destructión of Maumetry,[1] 230
And in increase of Christés lawé dear,
They been accorded so as ye may hear:
How that the Soudan and his baronage,
And all his lieges, should ychristened be,
And he shall have Custánce in marriáge, 235
And certain gold, I n'ot[2] what quantity,
And hereto finden suffisant surety.
The same accord is sworn on either side;
Now, fair Custánce, almighty God thee guide.
Now woulden some men waiten, as I guess, 240
That I should tellen all the purveyance
The which that th' Emperor of his nobless
Hath shapen[3] for his daughter, Dame Custánce.
Well may men know that so great ordinance
May no man tellen in a little clause 245
As was arrayéd for so high a cause.
Bishopés been shapen with her for to wend,
Lordés, ladiés, and knightés of renown,
And other folk enow; this is the end:
And notifiéd is through all the town 250
That every wight with great devotión
Should prayen Christ that he this marriáge
Receive in gree,[4] and speedé this viage.[5]
The day is comen of her départing,
I say, the woful day fatál is come 255
That there may be no longer tarrying,
But forward they them dressen[6] all and some.
Custánce, that was with sorrow' all overcome,
Full pale arose, and dresseth her to wend[7]
For well she seeth there is none other end. 260
Alas! what wonder is it though she wept,
That shall be sent to strangé natión
From friendés that so tenderly her kept,
And to be bound under subjectión
Of one she know'th not his conditión? 265
Husbandés be all good, and have been yore,[8]
That knowén wivés,—I dare say no more.
"Father, (she said) thy wretched child, Custánce,
Thy youngé daughter, fostered up so soft,

[1] Maumetry—Mahometanism. [2] N'ot—know not. [3] Shapen—provided. [4] Receive in gree—receive kindly. [5] Viage—voyage, journey. [6] Dressen—prepare. [7] Wend—go. [8] Yore—long ago.

And ye, my mother, my sovereign pleasance 270
Over all thing, (out taken Christ on loft)[1]
Custánce your child her recommendeth oft
Unto your grace, for I shall to Surrie,
Ne shall I never see you more with eye.
"Alas! unto the Barbare natión 275
I musté gone, since that it is your will;
But Christ, that starv'd[2] for our redemptión,
So give me grace his hestés[3] to fulfil,
I wretched woman, no force though I spill:[4]
Women are born to the thraldom and penánce, 280
And to be under mannés governance."
I trow[5] at Troy when Pyrrhus brake the wall,
Or Ilion burn'd, or Thebés the city,
Ne' at Romé for the harm through Hannibal,
That Romans hath vanquíshéd timés three, 285
N'as[6] heard such tender weeping for pity
As in the chamber was for her parting;
But forth she must, whether she weep or sing.

* * * *

Imprudent Emperor of Rome, alas!
Was there no philosópher' in all thy town? 290
Is no time bet[7] than other in such case?
Of voyage is there none eleetión,
Namely to folk of high conditión,
Not when a root is of a birth yknow?[8]
Alas! we be too lewéd[9] or too slow. 295
To ship is brought this woful fairé maid
Solemnély, with every circumstance:
"Now Jesu Christ be with you all," she said.
There n'is no more, but "Farewell, fair Custánce."
She paineth her to make good countenance; 300
And forth I let her sail in this manner,
And turn I will again to my matter.
The mother of the Soudan, well of vices,
Espiéd hath her sonés plein[10] intent,
How he will lete[11] his oldé sacrifices; 305
And right anon she for her council sent,
And they been comen to know what she meant;
And when assembled was this folk in fere[12]
She set her down, and said as ye shall hear.
"Lordés, she said, ye knowen evereach one 310
How that my son in point is for to lete[11]

[1] Out taken Christ on loft—Christ on high excepted. [2] Starved—died. [3] Hestes—commands. [4] No force though I spill—no matter though I perish. [5] Trow—think. [6] N'as—was not. [7] Bet—better. [8] Yknow—known. [9] Lewed—ignorant. [10] Plein—full. [11] Lete—leave. [12] In fere—in company.

The holy lawés of our Alkoran,
Given by Goddés messenger Ma'omet;
But one avow to greaté God I hete,[1]
The life shall rather out of my body start 315
Than Mahometés law out of mine heart.
"What should us tiden[2] of this newé law
But thraldom to our bodies and penánce,
And afterward in hellé to be draw,[3]
For we reneiéd[4] Mahound our creance?[5] 320
But, Lordés, will ye maken assurance,
As I shall say, assenting to my lore?[6]
And I shall make us safe for evermore."
They sworen and assented every man
To live with her and die, and by her stond; 325
And evereach one, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen her shall all his friendés fond.[7]
And she hath this emprise ytaken in hond
Which ye shall hearen that I shall devise,
And to them all she spake right in this wise. 330
"We shall first feign us Christendom to take;
Cold water shall not grieve us but a lite;[8]
And I shall such a feast and revel make
That, as I trow, I shall the Soudan quite:[9]
For though his wife be christened ne'er so white, 335
She shall have need to wash away the red
Though she a font of water with her led."
O Soudaness, root of iniquity,
Virago thou, Semiramis the second,
O serpent under femininity, 340
Like to the serpent deep in hell ybound,
O feignéd woman! all that may confound
Virtue and innocence, through thy malíce
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice.
O Sathan envious! since thilké day 345
That thou wert chaséd from our heritage,
Well knowest thou to woman th' oldé way:
Thou madest Eva bring us in servage,[10]
Thou wilt foredo[11] this Christian marriage;
Thine instrument so (well-away the while!) 350
Mak'st thou of women when thou wilt beguile.
This Soudaness, whom I thus blame and warry,[12]
Let privily her council go their way:
What should I in this Talé longer tarry?

[1] Hete — promise. [2] Tiden—befall. [3] Draw—dragged, drawn. [4] For we reneied—because we denied. [5] Creance—belief. [6] Lore—advice. [7] Fond—essay, try. [8] Lite—little. [9] Quite—requite. [10] Servage—bondage. [11] Foredo—ruin. [12] Warry—oppose.

She rideth to the Soudan on a day, 355
And said him that she would reney[1] her lay,[2]
And Christendom of priestés handés fong,[3]
Repenting her she Heathen was so long;
Beseeching him to do her that honóur
That she might have the Christian folk to feast; 360
"To pleasen them I will do my labóur."
The Soudan saith, "I will do at your hest,"[4]
And kneeling thankéd her of that request;
So glad he was he n'ist[5] not what to say,
She kiss'd her son, and home she go'th her way. 365
Arrivéd been these Christian folk to lond
In Surrie, with a great solemné rout,
And hastily this Soudan sent his sond[6]
First to his mother and all the regne[7] about,
And said his wife was comen out of doubt, 370
And pray'd them for to ride again[8] the queen,
The honour of his regné to sustain.
Great was the press,[9] and riché was th' array
Of Surrians and Romans met in fere.[10]
The mother of the Soudan rich and gay, 375
Receivéd her with all so glad a cheer[11]
As any mother might her daughter dear;
And to the nexté city there beside,
A softé pace solemnély they ride.
Naught trow[12] I the triúmph of Julius, 380
Of which that Lucan maketh such a boast,
Was royaller, or more curious
Then was th' assembly of this blissful host;
Butté this scorpion, this wicked ghost,[13]
The Soudaness, for all her flattering, 385
Cast[14] under this full mortally to sting.
The Soudan com'th himself soon after this
So royally, that wonder is to tell,
And welcom'th her with allé joy and bliss.
And thus in mirth and joy I let them dwell; 390
The fruit of this matter is that I tell.
When timé came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint, and men go to their rest.
The timé come is, this old Soudaness
Ordainéd hath the feast of which I told, 395
And to the feasté Christian folk them dress
In general, yea, bothé young and old.

[1] Reney—renounce. [2] Lay—religious profession. [3] Fong—take. [4] Hest—desire, command. [5] N'ist, ne wist—knew not. [6] Sond—sound, message. [7] Regne—kingdom. [8] Again—to meet. [9] Press—crowd. [10] Fere—company. [11] Cheer—countenance. [12] Trow—believe. [13] Ghost—spirit, mind. [14] Cast—compassed, contrived.

There may men feast and royalty behold,
And dainties more than I can you devise;
But all too dear they bought it ere they rise. 400
O sudden woe, that e'er art successór
To worldly bliss! sprent[1] is with bitterness
Th' end of the joy of our worldly labóur:
Woe occupieth the fine[2] of our gladness.
Hearken this counsel for thy sikerness;[3] 405
Upon thy gladdé day have in thy mind
The unware woe of harm that com'th behind.
For shortly for to tellen at a word,
The Soudan and the Christians evereach one
Been all to-hewn and stickéd at the board, 410
But it were only Dame Custánce alone.
This oldé Soudaness, this cursed crone,[4]
Hath with her friendés done this cursed deed,
For[5] she herself would all the country lead.
Ne there was Surrian none that was converted, 415
That of the council of the Soudan wot,[6]
That he n'as all to hewn ere he astarted;[7]
And Custánce have they taken' anon foot-hot,[8]
And in a ship all steeréless (God wot)
They have her set, and bidden her learné sail 420
Out of Surrie againward to Itaile.
A certain treasure that she thither led,
And soth to say vitaillé great plenty,
They have her given, and clothés eke she had,
And forth she saileth in the salté sea. 425
O my Custánce! full of benignity,
O emperorés youngé daughter dear!
He that is Lord of fortune, be thy steer.[9]
She blesseth her, and with full piteous voice
Unto the cross of Christ thus saidé she: 430
"O clear, O wealful[10] altar, holy cross!
Red of the Lambés blood, full of pity,
That wash'd the world from th' old iniquity,
Me from the fiend and from his clawés keep
That day that I shall drenchen[11] in the deep. 435
"Victorious tree, protectión of true,
That only worthy weré for to bear
The King of heaven with his woundés new,
The whité Lamb, that hurt was with a spear;
Flemer[12] of fiendés out of him and her 440

[1] Sprent—sprinkled. [2] Fine—end, conclusion. [3] Sikerness—security. [4] Crone—old woman. [5] For—because. [6] Wot—knew. [7] Astarted—made his escape. [8] Foot-hot—hastily, with all expedition. [9] Steer—helm, guide. [10] Wealful—full of happiness. [11] Drenchen—drown. [12] Flemer—expeller.

On which thy limbés faithfully extend,
Me keep, and give me might my life t' amend."
  Yearés and dayés fleet[1] this creáture
Throughout the sea of Greece, unto the Strait
Of Maroc, as it was her áventure : 445
On many a sorry meal now may she bait ;
After her death full often may she wait,
Or[2] that the wildé wavés will her drive
Unto the place there[3] as she shall arrive.
  Men mighten asken why she was not slain ? 450
Eke at the feast who might her body save ?
And I answér to that demand again,
Who savéd Daniel in th' horríble cave,
There[3] every wight save he, master or knave,
Was with the lion frett[4] ere he astart ?[5] 455
No wight but God, that he bare in his heart.
  God list to shew his wonderful mirácle
In her, for we should see his mighty workés :
Christ, which that is to every harm triácle,[6]
By certain meanés oft, as knowen clerkés, 460
Doth thing for certain endé, that full dark is
To mannés wit, that for our ignorance
Ne cannot know his prudent purveyance.[7]
  Now since she was not at the feast yslaw,[8]
Who kepté her from drenching[9] in the sea ? 465
Who kepté Jonas in the fish's maw,
Till he was spouted up at Nineveh ?
Well may men know it was no wight but he
That kept the people' Ebraike[10] from drenching,
With dryé feet throughout the sea passing. 470
  Who bade the fouré spirits of tempést,
That power have t' annoyen land and sea,
Both north and south, and also west and east,
Annoyen neither sea, nor land, nor tree ?
Sothly[11] the commander of that was he 475
That from the tempest aye this woman kept,
As well when she awoke as when she slept.
  Where might this woman meat and drinké have ?
Three years and more how lasteth her vitáille ?
Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave, 480
Or in desért ? no wight but Christ *sans faille.*
Five thousand folk it was as great marváille

[1] Fleet—fleeted, sped. [2] Or—ere, before. [3] There—where. [4] Frett (fretted)—devoured. [5] Astart—started, escaped. [6] Triacle, (Fr. *theriaque*)—remedy in general. [7] Purveyance, (Fr. *prévoyance*)—foresight. [8] Yslaw—slain. [9] Drenching—drowning. [10] Ebraike—Hebrew. [11] Sothly—in truth.

With loavés five and fishes two to feed:
God sent his foison[1] at her greaté need.
She driveth forth into our océan 485
Throughout our widé sea, till at the last
Under a hold,[2] that nempnen[3] I ne can,
Far in Northumberland, the wave her cast,
And in the sand her ship stickéd so fast,
That thennés would it not in all a tide: 490
The will of Christ was that she should abide.
The Constabl' of the castle down is fare[4]
To see this wreck, and all the ship he sought,
And found this weary woman full of care;
He found also the treasure that she brought: 495
In her languáge mercy she besought,
The life out of her body for to twinn,
Her to deliver of woe that she was in.
A manner Latin córrupt was her speech,
But algate[5] thereby was she understond. 500
The Constable, when he list no longer seech,[6]
This woful woman brought he to the lond.
She kneeleth down, and thanketh Goddés sond;[7]
But what she was she wouldé no man say[8]
For foul nor fair, though that she shouldé dey. 505
She said she was so maséd[9] in the sea
That she forgot her mindé, by her truth.
The Constabl' hath of her so great pitý,
And eke his wife, that they weepen for ruth:
She was so diligent withouten sloth 510
To serve and pleasen evereach in that place
That all her love that looken in her face.
The Constabl' and Dame Hermegild his wife
Were Pagans, and that country every where;
But Hermegild lov'd Custance as her life; 515
And Custance hath so long sojóurnéd there
In orisons,[10] with many a bitter tear,
Till Jesu hath converted through his grace
Dame Hermegild, Constábless of that place.
In all that land no Christians dursté route;[11] 520
All Christian folk been fled from that countrý
Through Pagans, that conquérden all about
The plages[12] of the north by land and sea.
To Walés fled the Christianity

[1] Foison—abundance. [2] Hold—fort. [3] Nempnen—name, call. [4] Is fare—has come, repaired. [5] Algate—nevertheless. [6] Seech—seek, inquire. [7] Sond—gift, munificence. [8] She woulde no man say—she would have no man discover. [9] Mased — confounded, stupified. [10] Orisons—prayers. [11] Route—congregate. [12] Plages—regions.

Of oldé Britons dwelling in this isle; 525
There was their refuge for the meané while.
But yet n'ere[1] Christian Britons so exiléd
That there n'ere some which in their privity
Honóured Christ, and Heathen folk beguiléd,
And nigh the castle such there dwelten three: 530
That one of them was blind, and might not see,
But it were[2] with thilk[3] eyen of his mind,
With which men mowen[4] see when they be blind.
Bright was the sun as in that summer's day,
For which the Constabl' and his wife also, 535
And Custance, have ytake[5] the righté way
Towárd the sea a furlong way or two,
To playen and to roamen to and fro,
And in their walk this blindé man they met,
Crooked and old, with eyen fast yshet. 540
"In the name of Christ," criéd this blind Britón,
"Dame Hermegild, give me my sight again."
This lady wax'd afraiéd of that soun,[6]
Lest that her husband, shortly for to sain,
Would her for Jesu Christés love have slain, 545
Till Custance made her bold, and bad her worche[7]
The will of Christ, as daughter of holy church.
The Constable wax'd abashéd[8] of that sight,
And saidé, "What amounteth all this fare?"[9]
Custánce answér'd; "Sir, it is Christés might, 550
That helpeth folk out of the fiendés snare:"
And so farforth she 'gan our law declare,
That she the Constabl', ere that it were eve,
Converted, and on Christ made him believe.
This Constable was not lord of the place 555
Of which I speak, there as he Custance found,
But kept it strongly many a winter space
Under Allá, King of Northumberlond,
That was full wise, and worthy of his hond
Against the Scottés, as men may well hear; 560
But turn I will again to my mattére.
Sathan, that ever us waiteth to beguile,
Saw of Custánce all her perfectión,
And cast anon how he might quit her while,[10]
And made a youngé knight, that dwelt in that town,
Love her so hot of foul affectión, 566

[1] N'ere, ne were—were not. [2] But it were—unless it were. [3] Thilk—those same. [4] Mowen—may, are able. [5] Ytake—taken. [6] Soun—sound, speech. [7] Worche—work, perform. [8] Abashed—astonished. [9] What amounteth all this fare?—in vulgar parlance, "what is all this ado?" [10] Quit her while—requite her pains.

That verily he thought that he should spill [1]
But [2] he of her might onés have his will.
He wooeth her, but it availeth naught;
She wouldé do no sinné by no way; 570
And for despite he compasséd his thought
To maken her a shameful death to dey:
He waiteth when the Constabl' is away,
And privily upon a night he crept
In Hermegildés chamber while she slept. 575
Weary, forwakéd [3] in her orisons,
Sleepeth Custánce, and Hermegild also.
This knight, through Sathanas' temptatións,
All softély is to the bed ygo,
And cut the throat of Hermegild a-two, 580
And laid the bloody knife by Dame Custánce,
And went his way, there [4] God give him mischance.
Soon after com'th this Constabl' home again,
And eke Allá, that king was of that lond,
And saw his wife dispiteously yslain, 585
For which full oft he wept and wrung his hond;
And in the bed the bloody knife he found
By Dame Custánce. Alas! what might she say?
For very woe her wit was all away.
To king Allá was told all this mischance, 590
And eke the time, and where, and in what wise,
That in a ship was founden this Custánce,
As herebefore ye have heard me devise:
The kingés heart of pity 'gan agrise, [5]
When he saw so benign a creáture 595
Fall in disease [6] and in misáventure.
For as the lamb towárd his death is brought,
So stood this innocent before the king:
This falsé knight, that hath this treason wrought,
Bear'th her in hand [7] that she hath done this thing:
But nathéless there was great murmuring 601
Among the people, and say they cannot guess
That she had done so great a wickedness;
For they have seen her ever so virtuous,
And loving Hermegild right as her life. 605
Of this bare witness evereach in that house,
Save he that Hermegild slew with his knife.
This gentle king hath caught a great motif [8]
Of this witnéss, and thought he would enquere
Deeper in this case, truthé forto lere. [9] 610

[1] Spill—perish. [2] But—unless. [3] Forwaked—having lain long awake. [4] There—where. [5] Agrise—shudder. [6] Disease—trouble. [7] Bear'th her in hand—accuseth falsely. [8] Motif—motive, incitement. [9] Lere—learn.

Alas! Custánce, thou hast no champión,
Ne fighten canst thou not, so well-away!
But he that starf[1] for our redemptión,
And bound Sathán, and yet li'th there he lay,
So be thy strongé champion this day: 615
For but if Christ on thee mirácle kith[2]
Withouten guilt thou shalt be slain as swith.[3]
She set her down on knees, and thus she said;
"Immortal God! that savedest Susanne
From falsé blame, and thou mercíful maid, 620
Mary I mean, daughter to Saint Anne,
Before whose child angels singen Osanne,
If I be guiltless of this felony
My succour be, or ellés shall I die."
Have ye not seen sometime a palé face 625
(Among a press[4]) of him that hath been led
Towárd his death, where as he getteth no grace,[5]
And such a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bested[6]
Amongés all the faces in that rout, 630
So stant Custánce, and looketh her about.
O queenés living in prosperity,
Duchesses, and ye ladies evereach one!
Haveth some ruth on her adversity:
An emperorés daughter stands alone; 635
She hath no wight to whom to make her moan.
O blood royal, that standest in this drede,[7]
Far be thy friendés in thy greaté need!
This Alla King, hath such compassión,
As gentle heart is fulfilléd of pity, 640
That from his eyen ran the water down.
"Now hastily do fetch a book, quod he,
And if this knight will swearen how that she
This woman slew, yet will we us avise,[8]
Whom that we will that shall be our justíce." 645
A Briton book, written with Evangiles,
Was fet,[9] and on this book he swore anon
She guilty was, and in the meané whiles,
A hand him smote upon the necké bone,
That down he fell at onés as a stone, 650
And both his eyen burst out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.
A voice was heard, in general audience,
That said, "Thou hast deslandred guilteless

[1] Starf—died. [2] Kith—maketh known. [3] Swith—quickly, immediately. [4] Press—crowd. [5] Grace—favour, pardon. [6] Bested—beset, situated. [7] Drede — fear. [8] Avise — consider, observe. [9] Fet—fetched, brought.

The daughter of holy church in high presénce; 655
Thus hast thou done, and yet hold I my peace.*
Of this marváille aghast was all the press;[1]
As maséd[2] folk they standen evereach one
For dread of wreaké,[3] save Custánce alone.
Great was the dread and eke the repentance 660
Of them that haddén wrong suspectión
Upon this sely[4] innocent Custánce:
And for this mirácle, in conclusión,
And by Custánce's mediatión,
The king, and many another in that place, 665
Converted was, thankéd be Christés grace.
This falsé knight was slain for his untruth
By judgément of Alla hastily;
And yet Custánce had of his death great ruth;
And after this, Jesús of his mercý 670
Made Alla wedden full solemnély
This holy woman, that is so bright and sheen;[5]
And thus hath Christ ymade Custánce a queen.
But who was woful (if I shall not lie)
Of this weddíng but Don'gild, and no mo, 675
The kingés mother, full of tyranny?
Her thought her curséd hearté burst a-two;
She would not that her soné had done so:
Her thoughté a despíte,[6] that he should take
So strange a creáture unto his make.[7] 680
Me list not[8] of the chaff nor of the stre[9]
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What should I tellen of the royalty
Of this marriáge, or which course go'th beforn,
Who bloweth in a trompé or in a horn? 685
The fruit of every tale is for to say;
They eat and drink, and dance, and sing, and play.
They go to bed, as it was skill and right,
For though that wivés be full holy things,
They musten take in patiénce a-night 690
Such manner necessaries, as be pleasings
To folk that have ywedded them with rings,
And lay a lite[10] their holiness aside
As for the time, it may no bet[11] betide.
On her he 'gat a knavé[12] child anon, 695
And to a bishop, and his Constabl' eke,
He took his wife to keep, when he is gone

[1] Press—crowd. [2] Mased—bewildered. [3] Wreake—revenge. [4] Sely—simple, harmless. [5] Sheen—shining. [6] Her thoughte a despite—she conceived a malicious intention. [7] Make—mate, wife. [8] Me list not—I have no inclination. [9] Stre—straw. [10] Lite—little. [11] Bet—better. [12] Knave—male.

To Scotland ward, his foemen for to seek.
Now fair Custánce, that is so humbl' and meek,
So long is gone with childé till that still 700
She halt[1] her chamber, abiding Christés will.
The time is come, a knavé[2] child she bare;
Mauricius at the fontstone they him call.
This Constable doth forth come[3] a messenger,
And wrote unto his king, that clepéd[4] was All', 705
How that this blissful tiding is befall,
And other tidings speedful for to say.
He hath the letter, and forth he go'th his way.
This messenger, to do his ávantage,
Unto the kingés mother rideth swithe,[5] 710
And salueth her full fair in his languáge.
"Madáme, quod he, ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanken God a hundred thousand sithe;[6]
My lady queen hath child, withouten doubt,
To joy and bliss of all this regne about. 715
"Lo, here the letter sealéd of this thing,
That I must bear in all the haste I may.
If ye will aught unto your son the king,
I am your servant bothé night and day."
Donegild answér'd, "As now at this time, nay; 720
But here I will all night thou take thy rest,
To-morrow will I say thee what me lest."[7]
This messenger drank sadly[8] ale and wine,
And stolen were his letters privily
Out of his box, while he slept as a swine; 725
And contrefeited was full subtlely
Another letter, wrought full sinfully,
Unto the king, direct of this mattére
From his Constábl', as ye shall after hear.
This letter spake, the queen delivered was 730
Of so horríble a fiendlike creáture,
That in the castle none so hardy was
That any whilé durst therein endure:
The mother was an elf[9] by áventure
Ycome, by charmés or by sorcery, 735
And every man hateth her company.
Woe was this king when he this letter' had seen,
But to no wight he told his sorrows sore,
But of his owen hand he wrote again;
"Welcome the sond[10] of Christ for evermore 740
To me, that am now learned in his lore:

[1] Halt—kept, held. [2] Knave—male. [3] Doth forth come—causes to come forth. [4] Cleped—called. [5] Swithe—straightly, immediately. [6] Sithe—times. [7] Lest—desire. [8] Sadly—steadily, pertinaciously. [9] Elf—witch. [10] Sond—message, will.

Lord, welcome be thy lust[1] and thy pleasánce;
My lust I put all in thine ordinance.
"Keepeth this child, all be it foul or fair,
And eke my wife, unto mine home-coming: 745
Christ when he list may senden me an heir
More agreeáble than this to my liking."
This letter he sealéd, privily weeping,
Which to the messenger was taken soon,
And forth he go'th, there is no more to done. 750
O messenger fulfilled of drunkenness!
Strong is thy breath, thy limbés faultren aye,
And thou bewrayest[2] allé secretness;
Thy mind is lorn,[3] thou janglest[4] as a jay;
Thy face is turnéd in a new array.[5] 755
Where drunkenness reigneth in any rout
There is no counsel hid withouten doubt.
O Donegild! I n' have none English digne[6]
Unto thy malice and thy tyranny,
And therefore to the fiend I thee resign, 760
Let him enditen of thy traitory.
Fy, mannish,[7] fy! O nay, by God I lie;
Fy, fiendlike spirit! for I dare well tell
Though thou here walk, thy spirit is in hell.
This messenger cometh from the king again, 765
And at the kingés mother's court he light,
And she was of this messenger full fain,[8]
And pleaséd him in all that ever she might.
He drank and well his girdle underpight;[9]
He sleepeth and he snoreth in his guise[10] 770
All night, until the sunné 'gan arise.
Eft[11] were his letters stolen every one,
And contrefeited letters in this wise.
The king commanded his Constáble' anon,
Up[12] pain of hanging and of high jewíse,[13] 775
That he ne shouldé suffren in no wise
Custánce within his regné for t' abide
Three dayés and a quarter of a tide;
But in the samé ship as he her found
Her and her youngé son, and all her geer, 780
He shouldé put, and crowd her from the lond,
And charge her that she never eft[11] come there.
O my Custánce! well may thy ghost have fear,

[1] Lust—pleasure. [2] Bewrayest—betrayest, discoverest. [3] Lorn—lost. [4] Janglest—babblest. [5] Turned in a new array—altered in appearance. [6] Digne—becoming, worthy. [7] Mannish—man-like: a term of heavy reproach when applied to a woman. [8] Fain—glad. [9] Underpight—put under. [10] Guise—manner, custom. [11] Eft—again. [12] Up—upon. [13] Jewise—judgment, punishment.

And sleeping in thy dream, be in penánce,
When Donegild cast all this ordinance. 785
This messenger on morrow when he woke
Unto the castle halt [1] the nexté way,
And to the Constabl' he the letter took;
And when that he this piteous letter sey [2]
Full oft he said "Alas, and well-away! 790
Lord Christ, quod he, how may this world endure.
So full of sin is many a creáture?
"O mighty God! if that it be thy will,
Since thou art rightful judge, how may it be
That thou wilt suffren innocence to spill,[3] 795
And wicked folk reign in prosperity?
Ah! good Custánce, alas! so woe is me,
That I must be thy tórmentor, or dey
A shamés death, there is no other way."
Weepen both young and old in all that place 800
When that the king this cursed letter sent:
And Custance with a deadly palé face
The fourthé day towárd the ship she went;
But nathéless [4] she tak'th in good intent
The will of Christ, and kneeling on the strond 805
She saidé; "Lord, aye welcome be thy sond.[5]
"He that me kepté from the falsé blame,
While I was in the land amongés you,
He can me keep from harm and eke from shame
In the salt sea, although I see not how: 810
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now:
In him trust I, and in his mother dear,
That is to me my sail and eke my steer."[6]
Her little child lay weeping in her arm;
And kneeling piteously, to him she said, 815
"Peace, little son, I will do thee no harm:"
With that her kerchief off her head she braid,[7]
And over his little eyen she it laid,
And in her arm she lulleth it full fast,
And into th' heaven her eyen up she cast. 820
"Mother, quod she, and maiden bright, Mary!
Soth is, that through womannés eggment[8]
Mankind was lorn,[9] and damnéd aye to die,
For which thy child was on a cross yrent:[10]
Thy blissful eyen saw all his torment; 825

[1] Halt—kept, took. [2] Sey—saw. [3] Spill—perish. [4] Natheless—nevertheless. [5] Sond—command, message. [6] Steer—guide, helm. [7] Braid—took. [8] Eggment—incitement: "To egg (qy *edge*) me on," is still used by the commonalty. [9] Lorn—undone. [10] Yrent—torn.

Then is there no comparison between
Thy woe and any woe man may sustain.
" Thou saw'st thy child yslain before thine eyen,
And yet now liveth my little child parfay :[1]
Now, Lady bright ! to whom all woful crien, 830
Thou glory of womanhood, thou fairé May !
Thou haven of refúte,[2] bright star of day !
Rue[3] on my child, that of thy gentleness
Ruest on every rueful in distress.
" O little child, alas ! what is thy guilt, 835
That never wroughtest sin as yet pardíe ?
Why will thine hardé father have thee spilt ?[4]
O mercy, dearé Constable ! (quod she)
As let my little child dwell here with thee ;
And if thou dar'st not saven him from blame, 840
So kiss him onés in his father's name."
Therewith she looketh backward to the land,
And saidé ; " Farewell, husband ruthéless ! "[5]
And up she rose, and walketh down the strand
Towárd the ship ; her followeth all the press :[6] 845
And ever she prayeth her child to hold his peace,
And tak'th her leave, and with a holy intent
She blesseth her, and into the ship she went.
Victáilléd was the ship, it is no drede,[7]
Abundantly for her a full long space ; 850
And other necessaries that should need
She had enow, heriéd[8] be Goddés grace :
For wind and weather, almighty God purcháse,[9]
And bring her home, I can no better say,
But in the sea she driveth forth her way. 855
Allá the king com'th home soon after this
Unto his castle, of the which I told,
And asketh where his wife and his child is ;
The Constable 'gan about his hearté cold,[10]
And plainly all the matter he him told 860
As ye have heard, I can tell it no better,
And show'd the king his sealé and his letter ;
And saidé ; " Lord, as ye commanded me
Up[11] pain of death, so have I done certáin."
This messenger tormented was, till he 865
Musté beknow,[12] and tellen plat[13] and plain
From night to night in what place he had lain :

[1] Parfay—by my faith. [2] Refute, (Fr. *refuite*)—refuge. [3] Rue—have pity. [4] Spilt—destroyed. [5] Ruthless—pitiless. [6] Press—crowd. [7] Drede—doubt. [8] Heried—praised. [9] Purchase—procure, provide. [10] Cold—to grow cold. [11] Up—upon. [12] Beknow—make known, confess. [13] Plat—synonymous with plain.

And thus by wit and subtl' enquiring
Imagin'd was by whom this harm 'gan spring.
The hand was knowen that the letter wrote, 870
And all the venom of this cursed deed,
But in what wise certainly I n'ot.[1]
Th' effect is this, that Alla out of drede[2]
His mother slew, that may men plainly read,
For that she traitor was to her 'legiance. 875
Thus endeth this old Don'gild with mischance.
The sorrow that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his wife and for his child also,
There is no tongué that it tellen may.
But now will I again to Custance go, 880
That fleeteth in the sea in pain and woe
Five years and more, as likéd Christés sond,[3]
Ere that her ship approachéd to the lond.
Under a Heathen castle at the last,
(Of which the name in my text I not find) 885
Custánce and eke her child the sea up cast.
Almighty God, that savéd all mankind,
Have on Custánce and on her child some mind,
That fallen is in Heathen hand, eftsoon
In point to spill[4] as I shall tell you soon. 890
Down from the castle com'th there many a wight
To garen[5] on this ship and on Custánce :
But shortly from the castle on a night,
The lordés steward (God give him mischance !)
A thief that had reneyed our créance,[6] 895
Came into the ship alone, and said he would
Her lemman[7] be, whether she would or n'ould.
Woe was this wretched woman then begone ;
Her childé cried, and she cried piteously ;
But blissful Mary holpe her right anon ; 900
For with her struggling well and mightily,
The thief fell overboard all suddenly,
And in the sea he drenchéd[8] for vengéance :
And thus hath Christ unwemméd[9] kept Custánce.
O foulé lust of luxury ! lo thine end, 905
Not only that thou faintest[10] mannés mind,
But verily thou wilt his body shend.[11]
Th' endé of thy work, or of thy lustés blind,
Is complaining : how many may men find

[1] N'ot—know not. [2] Out of drede—without doubt. [3] Sond—ordinance. [4] Point to spill—at the point of destruction. [5] Garen—gaze, stare. [6] Reneyed our creance — renounced our faith. [7] Lemman—lover. [8] Drenched — drowned. [9] Unwemmed — undefiled. [10] Faintest—weakenest. [11] Shend—destroy.

That not for work sometime, but for th' intent 910
To do this sin, be either slain or shent?[1]
How may this weaké woman have the strength
Her to defend against this renegate?[2]
O Gólias! unmeasurable of length,
How mighté David maken thee so mate?[3] 915
So young, and of armúre so desolate,
How durst he look upon thy dreadful face?
Well may men see it was but Goddés grace.
Who gave Judith couráge or hardiness
To slay him, Holofernes, in his tent, 920
And to deliver out of wretchedness
The peopl' of God? I say for this intent,
That right as God spirit of vigour sent
To them, and savéd them out of mischance,
So sent he might and vigour to Custánce. 925
Forth go'th her ship throughout the narrow mouth
Of Jubaltare[4] and Septe,[5] driving alway,
Sometimé west, and sometime north and south,
And sometime east, full many a weary day,
Till Christés mother (blessed be she aye) 930
Hath shapen[6] through her endéless goodness
To make an end of all her heaviness.
Now let us stint[7] of Custance but a throw,[8]
And speak we of the Roman emperor,
That out of Surrie hath by letters know[9] 935
The slaughter of Christian folk, and dishonóur
Done to his daughter by a false traitór,
I mean the cursed wicked Soudaness,
That at the feast let slay both more and less.
For which this emperor hath sent anon 940
His senator, with royal ordinance,
And other lordés, God wot, many one,
On Surrians to taken high vengeánce:
They brennen,[10] slayn, and bring them to mischance,
Full many a day: but shortly this is th' end, 945
Homeward to Rome they shapen[11] them to wend.
This senator repaireth with victóry
To Roméward, sailing full royally,
And met the ship driving, as saith the story,
In which Custánce sitteth full piteously: 950
Nothing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in such array, ne will she say
Of her estate, though that she shouldé dey.[12]

[1] Shent—destroyed. [2] Renegate — apostate from Christianity. [3] Mate—struck dead. [4] Gibraltar. [5] Ceuta. [6] Shapen—contrived. [7] Stint — cease. [8] Throw — short time. [9] Know — for known. [10] Brennen—burn. [11] Shapen—prepared. [12] Dey—die.

He bringeth her to Rome, and to his wife
He gave her, and her youngé son also, 955
And with the senator she led her life.
Thus can our Lady bringen out of woe
Woful Custánce, and many another mo:
And longé time dwelléd she in that place
In holy workés ever, as was her grace. 960
The senatorés wife her aunté was,
But for all that she knew her ne'er the more:
I will no longer tarry in this case;
But to King Alla, which I spake of yore,[1]
That for his wife weepeth and sigheth sore, 965
I will return, and let I will Custánce
Under the senatorés governance.
King Alla, which that had his mother slain,
Upon a day fell in such répentánce,
That if I shortly tellen shall and plain, 970
To Rome he cometh to receive his penánce,
And put him in the Popés ordinance
In high and low, and Jesu Christ besought
Forgive his wicked works that he had wrought.
The fame anon throughout the town is borne, 975
How Alla king shall come on pilgrimage,
By harbergers[2] that wenten him beforn,
For which the senator, as was uságe,
Rode him again,[3] and many of his lineáge,
As well to show his high magnificence 980
As to do any king a reverence.
Great cheeré doth this noble senatór
To King Allá, and he to him also:
Evereach of them doth other great honóur;
And so befell that in a day or two 985
This senator is to King Alla go[4]
To feast, and shortly, if I shall not lie,
Custánce's son went in his company.
Some men would say at réquest of Custánce
This senator hath led this child to feast: 990
I may not tellen every circumstance;
Be as be may, there was he at the least:
But soth[5] is this, that at his mother's hest[6]
Before Allá, during the meatés space,
The child stood, looking in the kingés face. 995
This Alla king hath of this child great wonder,
And to the senatór he said anon,
"Whose is that fairé child that standeth yonder?"

[1] Yore—formerly. [2] Harbergers—harbingers. [3] Rode him again—rode to meet him. [4] Is to King Alla go—is gone, or, went to King Alla. [5] Soth—true. [6] Hest—instruction.

"I n'ot,[1] quod he, by God, and by Saint John;
A mother he hath, but father hath he none 1000
That I of wot:" but shortly in a stound[2]
He told Allá how that this child was found.
"But God wot," quod this senator also,
"So virtuous a liver in all my life
Ne saw I never as she, ne heard of mo 1005
Of worldly woman, maiden, widow' or wife:
I dare well say her haddé lever[3] a knife
Throughout her breast than be a woman wicke;
There is no man could bring her to that prick."[4]
Now was this child as like unto Custánce 1010
As possíble is a creáture to be:
This Alla hath the face in rémembrance
Of Dame Custánce, and thereon muséd he,
If that the childés mother were aught she
That is his wife, and privily he sight,[5] 1015
And sped him from the table that he might.[6]
"Parfay,[7] thought he, phantom is in mine head;
I ought to deem of skilful judgément
That in the salté sea my wife is dead."
And afterward he made his argument; 1020
"What wot I if that Christ have hither sent
My wife by sea, as well as he her lent[8]
To my country, from thennés that she went?"
And after noon home with the senator
Go'th Alla, for to see this wonder chance.[9] 1025
This senator doth Alla great honóur,
And hastily he sent after Custánce;
But trusteth well her lusté not to dance:[10]
When that she wisté wherefore was that sond[11]
Unneth upon her feet she mighté stond.[12] 1030
When Alla saw his wife fair he her gret,[13]
And wept that it was ruthé for to see;
For at the firsté look he on her set
He knew well verily that it was she;
And she for sorrow as dumb stood as a tree: 1035
So was her hearté shut in her distress
When she remembered his unkindéness.
Twiés she swooneth in his owen sight;
He weepeth and him excuseth piteously:
"Now God, quod he, and all his hallows[14] bright,

[1] N'ot—know not. [2] In a stound—shortly. [3] Lever—rather. [4] Prick—point, result. [5] Sight—sighed. [6] That he might—as fast as he was able. [7] Parfay—by my faith. [8] Lent—suffered. [9] Wonder chance—wonderful event. [10] But trusteth, &c.—but be sure that she had no desire to dance. [11] Sond—message. [12] Unneth, &c.—scarcely could she stand upon her feet. [13] Gret—greeted. [14] Hallows—saints.

So wisely[1] on my soul as have mercý, 1041
That of your harm as guiltéless am I
As is Maurice my son, so like your face,
Ellés the fiend me fetch out of this place."
Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain 1045
Ere that their woful heartés mighten cease,
Great was the pity for to hear them plain,
Through whiché plaintés 'gan their woe increase.
I pray you all my labour to release,
I may not[2] tell their woe until to-morrow, 1050
I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.
But finally when that the soth is wist,[3]
That Alla guiltéless was of her woe,
I trow a hundred timés have they kiss'd,
And such a bliss is there betwixt them two, 1055
That save the joy that lasteth evermo
There is none like that any creature
Hath seen or shall, while that the world may dure.
Then prayéd she her husband meekély,
In rélief of her longé piteous pine,[4] 1060
That he would pray her father specially
That of his majesty he would incline
To vouchésafe some day with him to dine;
She pray'd him eke, he shouldé by no way
Unto her father no word of her say. 1065
Some men would say how that the child Maurice
Doth this messáge unto this emperor;
But as I guess Allá was not so nice,[5]
To him that is so sovereign of honoúr,
As he that is of Christian folk the flow'r, 1070
Send any child: but it is bet[6] to deem
He went himself, and so it may well seem.
This emperor hath granted gentlely
To come to dinner as he him besought;
And well read I he lookéd busily 1075
Upon this child, and on his daughter thought.
Allá goth to his inn, and as him ought
Arrayéd for this feast in every wise[7]
As forforth as his cunning[8] may suffice.
The morrow came, and Alla 'gan him dress,[9] 1080
And eke his wife, this emperor to meet;
And forth they ride in joy and in gladness;
And when she saw her father in the street
She light adown and falleth him to feet.[10]

[1] [illegible] [2] May not—[illegible] [3] [illegible] [4] [illegible] [5] Nice—[illegible] [6] [illegible] [7] Wise—manner [8] Cunning—[illegible] [9] Dress—[illegible] [10] [illegible] to feet—at his feet.

"Father, quod she, your youngé child, Custánc
Is now full clean out of your rémembrance.
"I am your daughter, your Custánce, quod s
That whilom ye have sent into Surrie;
It am I, father, that in the salté sea
Was put alone, and damned[1] for to die:
Now, goodé father, I you mercy cry;
Send me no more into none Heatheness,
But thanketh my lord here of his kindéness."
Who can the piteous joyé tellen all
Betwixt them three since they been thus ymet?
But of my Talé make an end I shall,
The day go'th fast, I will no longer let.[2]
These gladé folk to dinner been yset;
In joy and bliss at meat I let them dwell,
A thousand fold well more than I can tell.
This child Maurice was sithen[3] emperor
Made by the Pope, and livéd Christianly;
To Christés churché did he great honour:
But I let all his story passen by;
Of Custance is my Talé specially;
In th' oldé Roman gestés[4] men may find
Maurice's life, I bear it not in mind.
This King Allá, when he his timé sey,[5]
With his Custánce, his holy wife so sweet,
To England been they come the righté way,
There as they live in joy and in quiéte:
But little while it lasteth, I you hete;[6]
Joy of this world for time will not abide,
From day to night it changeth as the tide.
Who livéd e'er in such delight one day
That him ne moved either consciénce,
Or ire, or talent, or some kin affray,[7]
Envy, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I ne say but for this end this sentence,
That little while in joy or in pleasánce
Lasteth the bliss of Alla with Custánce.
For Death, that taketh of high and low his r
When passéd was a year, even as I guess,
Out of this world this King Allá he hent,[8]
For whom Custánce hath full great heaviness;
Now let us prayen God his soulé bless:
And Dame Custáncé, finally to say,
Towárd the town of Romé go'th her way.

[1] Damned—doomed, condemned. [2] Let—stay. [3] Sithen
wards. [4] Gestes—adventures. [5] Sey—saw. [6] Hete—wa
mise. [7] Kin affray—qy. kindred quarrel. [8] Hent—took.

To Rome is come this holy creáture,
And findeth there her friendés whole and sound;
Now is she scapéd all her áventure: 1131
And when that she her father hath yfound
Down on her kneés falleth she to ground,
Weeping for tenderness in hearté blith,
She herieth[1] God a hundred thousand sith.[2] 1135
In virtue and in holy almés deed
They liven all, and never asunder wend;[3]
Till death departeth them, this life they lead:
And fareth now well,—my Tale is at an end.
Now Jesu Christ, that of his might may send
Joy after woe, govérn us in his grace,
And keep us allé that be in this place. 1142

[1] Herieth--praiseth. [2] Sith—times. [3] Wend—depart.

"Yvanish'd was this dance he wist not where.
No créature saw he that baré life,
Save on the green he saw sitting a wife,—
A fouler wight there may no man devise."—l. 140.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE.

In oldé dayés of the King Artóur,
Of which that Britons speaken great honóur,
All was this land fulfill'd of Faéry;
The Elf-queen with her jolly company
Dancéd full oft in many a greené mead.
This was the old opinion as I read;
I speak of many hundred years ago,
But now can no man see none elvés mo;
For now the greaté charity and prayérs
Of limiters [1] and other holy freres,
That searchen every land and every stream,
As thick as motés in the sunné beam,

[1] Limiters—begging friars with a stated district.

The Wife of Bath's Tale.] A bachelor of King Arthur is enjoined by the Queen, upon pain of death, to tell what is that women do most desire. At length he is taught it by woman, whom he is enforced to marry.—*Urry.*

Blessing hallés, chambers, kitchenés, and bowers,
Cities and boroughs, castles high and towers,
Thorpés [1] and barnés, shepénés, [2] and dairies, 15
This maketh that there be no Faéries :
For there as wont to walken was an elf,
There walketh now the limiter [3] himself
In undermealés [4] and in morrownings,
And saith his matins and his holy things 20
As he go'th in his limitatión.[5]
Women may now go safely up and down,
In every bush, and under every tree,
There is none other Incubus but he,
And he ne will do them no dishonóur. 25
And so befell it, that this King Artóur
Had in his house a lusty bachelor,
That on a day came riding from rivér :
And happen'd that, alone as she was borne,
He saw a maiden walking him beforne, 30
'The' which maid he anon, maugre her head,
By very force 'shrewédly [6] misused :'
For which oppressión was such clamóur,
And such pursuit unto the King Artóur,
That damnéd [7] was this knight for to be dead 35
By course of law, and should have lost his head,
(Paráventure such was the statute tho) [8]
But that the queen and other ladies mo
So longé prayéden the king of grace,[9]
Till he his life him granted in the place, 40
And gave him to the queen, all at her will
To choose whethér she would him save or spill.[10]
The queené thank'th the king with all her might ;
And after this thus spake she to the knight,
When that she saw her time upon a day. 45
'Thou standest yet (quod she) in such array,
That of thy life yet hast thou not suretý ;
I grant thee life if thou canst tellen me
What thing is it that women most desiren :
Beware, and keep thy necké bone from iron. 50

[1] Thorpes—villages. [2] Shepenes—stables. [3] Limiters—begging friars with a stated district. [4] Undermeal — dinner. *See note below.* [5] Limitation—vocation of begging alms. [6] Shrewedly—wickedly, cursedly. [7] Damned — condemned. [8] Tho — then. [9] Grace—pardon. [10] Spill—execute.

V. 19. *undermeales.*] The undermeale, *i. e. undern-mele*, was the dinner of our ancestors. See the note *Clerk's Tale*, v. 260.

V. 24. *Incubus.*] The incubus was a mischievous elf, and is supposed to be a personification of that nocturnal oppression called the *night-mare*.

And if thou canst not tell it me anon,
Yet will I give thee leavé for to gone
A twelvemonth and a day to seek and lere [1]
An answer suffisant in this mattére;
And surety will I have, ere that thou pace,[2]
Thy body for to yielden in this place."
  Woe was the knight, and sorrowfully' he siketl
But what? he may not do all as he liketh.
And at the last he chose him for to wend,[3]
And come again right at the yearés end
With such answér as God would him purvey,
And tak'th his leave, and wendeth forth his way.
  He seeketh every house and every place,
Where as he hopeth for to finden grace,[4]
To learnen what thing women loven most;
But he ne could arriven in no cost
Where as he mighté find in this mattere
Two creátures according in fere.[5]
Some saiden women loven best richéss,
Some saiden' honóur, some saiden joliness,
Some rich array, some saiden 'lustihed,'[6]
And oft time to be widow' and to be wed.
  Some saiden that we be in heart most eséd
When that we be yflatter'd and ypraised.
He go'th full nigh the soth,[7] I will not lie;
A man shall win us best with flattery;
And with attendance and with business [8]
Be we yliméd [9] bothé more and less.
  And some men saiden that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest,[10]
And that no man reprove us of our vice,
But say that we be wise and nothing nice:[11]
For truély there n'is none of us all.
If any wight will claw us on the gall,[12]
That we n'ill kick for that he saith us soth; [13]
Essay, and he shall find it that so doth:
For be we ne'er so vicíous within,
We will be holden wise and clean of sin.
  And some saiden that great delight have we
For to be holden stable and eke secré,
And in one purpose steadfastly to dwell,
And not bewrayen thing that men us tell;

[1] Lere—learn. [2] Pace—depart. [3] Wend—go away. [4] Gra favour. [5] According in fere—agreeing together. [6] Lustihed-light, pleasure. [7] Soth—truth. [8] Business—assiduity. [9] Yli —caught as with bird-lime. [10] Lest—please. [11] Nice—silly, foo [12] Claw on the gall—fret a sore place. [13] For that he saith us so because he speaks the truth to us.

But that tale is not worth a raké-stele.[1]
Pardié we women connen nothing hele,[2]
Witness on Midas; will ye hear the Tale? 95
  Ovid, amongés other thingés smale,[3]
Said, Midas had under his longé hairs
Growing upon his head two ass's ears,
The whiché vice he hid, as he besté might,
Full subtlely from every mannés sight, 100
That save his wife there wist[4] of it no mo;
He lov'd her most, and trusted her also;
He prayéd her that to no creáture
She n'oldé[5] tellen of his dísfigure.
  She swore him Nay, for all the world to win 105
She n'olde do that villainy or sin,
To make her husband have so foul a name;
She would not tell it for her owen shame.
But nathéless her thoughté that she died
That she so longé should a counsel hide; 110
Her thought it swell so sore about her heart,
That needély some word her must astart;
And since she durst not tell it to no man,
Down to a marais[6] fasté by she ran;
Till she came there her hearté was a-fire: 115
And as a bittern bumbleth in the mire,
She laid her mouth unto the water down.
"Bewray me not, thou water, with thy soun,
Quod she; to thee I tell it, and no mo,
My husband hath long ass's earés two.' 120
Now is my heart all whole, now is it out,
I might no longer keep it out of doubt."
Here may ye see, though we a time abide,
Yet out it must; we can no counsel hide.
The remnant of the Tale, if ye will hear, 125
Readeth Ovíd, and there ye may it lere.[7]
  This knight, of which my Tale is specially,
When that he saw he might not come thereby,
(This is to say, what women loven most)
Within his breast full sorrowful was his ghost. 130
But home he go'th, he mighté not sojóurn;
The day was come that homeward must he turn.
And in his way it happen'd him to ride,
In all his care, under a forest side,
Whereas he saw upon a dancé go 135
Of ladies four-and-twenty, and yet mo.

[1] Rake-stele—shaft, or handle of a rake. [2] Connen nothing hele—can conceal nothing. [3] Smale—small. [4] Wist—knew. [5] N'olde—would not. [6] Marais—marsh. [7] Lere—learn.

Towárd this ilké dance he drew full yern,[1]
In hope that he some wisdom shouldé learn;
But certainly ere he came fully there
Yvanish'd was this dance he wist[2] not where; 140
No creáture saw he that baré life;
Save on the green he saw sittíng a wife,
A fouler wight there may no man devise.
Again[3] this knight this oldé wife 'gan rise,
And said; "Sir Knight, here forth ne li'th no way. 145
Tell me what that ye seeken by your fay,[4]
Peráventure it may the better be:
These oldé folk con[5] muchel thing," quod she.
"My levé[6] mother, quod this knight, certáin
I am but dead but if that I can sain 150
What thing it is that women most desire:
Could ye me wiss[7] I would quit well your hire."
"Plight me thy truth here in my hand, quod she,
The nexté thing that I require of thee
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might, 155
And I will tell it you ere it be night."
"Have here my truthé, quod the knight, I grant."
"Thenné, quod she, I dare me well avaunt
Thy life is safe, for I will stand thereby,
Upon my life the queen will say as I. 160
Let see which is the proudest of them all,
That weareth on a kerchief or a caul,
That dare say nay of that I shall you teach.
Let us go forth withouten longer speech."
Then rownéd she a pistel[8] in his ear, 165
And bade him to be glad, and have no fear.
When they been comen to the court, this knight
Said he had held his day as he had hight,[9]
And ready was his answer, as he said.
Full many a noble wife, and many a maid, 170
And many a widow, for that they be wise,
(The queen herself sitting as a justíce)
Assembled been, his answer for to hear,
And afterward this knight was bid appear.
To every wight commanded was silénce, 175
And that the knight should tell in audience
What thing that worldly women loven best.
This knight ne stood not still as doth a beast,
But to this questión anon answér'd
With manly voice, that all the court it heard. 180

[1] Yern—eagerly. [2] Wist—knew. [3] Again—toward. [4] Fay—faith. [5] Con—know. [6] Leve—dear. [7] Wiss—instruct. [8] Rowned a pistel—whispered a short speech, or lesson. [9] Hight—promised.

"My liegé Lady, generally, quod he,
Women desiren to have sovereignty,
As well over their husband as their love,
And for to be in mastry' him above.
This is your most desire, though ye me kill; 185
Do as you list, I am here at your will."
In all the court ne was there wife ne maid,
Ne widow, that contráried that he said,
But said he was worthý to have his life:
And with that word up start this oldé wife 190
Which that the knight saw sitting on the green.
"Mercy, quod she, my sovereign lady Queen,
Ere that your court depart, as do me right.
I taughté this answér unto this knight,
For which he plighted me his truthé there 195
The firsté thing I would of him requere
He would it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court then pray I thee, Sir Knight,
Quod she, that thou me take unto thy wife,
For well thou wot'st[1] that I have kept thy life: 200
If I say false, say nay upon thy fay."[2]
This knight answér'd, "Alas and well-away!
I wot right well that such was my behest.[3]
For Goddés love as choose a new request:
Take all my good, and let my body go." 205
"Nay then, quod she, I shréw[4] us bothé two:
For though that I be oldé, foul, and poor,
I n'olde[5] for all the metal or the ore
That under earth is grave,[6] or li'th above,
But if thy wife I were and eke thy love." 210
"My love! quod he; nay, my damnatión.
Alas! that any of my natión
Should ever so foully disparag'd be."
But all for naught; the end is this, that he
Constrainéd was, he needés must her wed, 215
And take this oldé wife, and go to bed.
Now woulden some men say paráventure,
That for my negligence, I do no cure[7]
To tellen you the joy and all th' array
That at the feasté was that ilké[8] day. 220
To which thing shortly answerén I shall:
I say there was no joy ne feast at all,
There n'as[9] but heaviness and muchel sorrow;
For privily he wedded her on the morrow,

[1] Wot'st—wottest, knowest. [2] Fay—faith. [3] Behest—promise. [4] Shrew—curse. [5] N'olde—would not. [6] Grave—engraven, buried. Do no cure—take no pains. [8] Ilke—same. [9] N'as—ne was.

And all day after hid him as an owl, 22
So woe was he his wife lookéd so foul.
Great was the woe the knight had in his thought
When he was with his wife a-bed ybrought;
He walloweth, and he turneth to and fro.
This oldé wife lay smiling evermo, 23
And said; "O dearé husband, *benedicite!*
Fareth every knight thus with his wife as ye?
Is this the law of King Artóurés house?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?[1]
I am your owen love, and eke your wife, 23
I am she which that savéd hath your life,
And certés yet did I you ne'er unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firsté night?
Ye faren like a man had lost his wit.
What is my guilt? for Goddés love tell it, 24
And it shall be amended if I may."
"Amended! quod this knight, alas! nay, nay,
It will not be amended never mo;
Thou art so loathly, and so old also,
And thereto comen of so low a kind,[2] 24
That little wonder is, though I wallow' and wind;
So wouldé God my hearté wouldé brest."[3]
"Is this, quod she, the cause of your unrest?"
"Yea certainly, quod he, no wonder is."
"Now Sir, quod she, I could amend all this, 25
If that me list, ere it were dayés three,
So, well ye mighten bear you unto me.[4]
"But for ye speaken of such gentleness
As is descended out of old richess,
That therefore shullen ye be gentlemen; 255
Such arrogancé is not worth a hen.
"Look who that is most virtuous alway;
Privy and apért,[5] and most intendeth aye
To do the gentle deedés that he can,
And take him for the greatest gentleman. 26
Christ will[6] we claim of him our gentleness,
Not of our elders[7] for their old richess;
For though they give us all their heritage,
For which we claim to be of high paráge,[8]
Yet may they not bequeathen, for no thing, 265
To none of us their virtuous living,

[1] Dangerous—fastidious, sparing. [2] Kind — kindred. [3] Brest —burst. [4] So, well ye mighten, &c.—*i.e.* "if so be you could conduct yourself well towards me." [5] Apert (Lat.)—open. [6] Will —wills, orders that, &c. [7] Elders—ancestors. [8] Parage—parentage, kindred.

That made them gentlemen calléd to be,
And bade us followen them in such degree.
"Well can the wisé poet of Florence,
That highté Dant, speaken of this sentence: 270
Lo, in such manner rime is Dante's tale:
"Full seld' up riseth by his branchés smale
Prowéss of man, for God of his goodness
Will[1] that we claim of him our gentleness;
For of our elders[2] may we nothing claim 275
But temporal thing, that man may hurt and maim.
"Eke every wight wot this as well as I,
If gentleness were planted naturally
Unto a certain lin'age down the line,
Privy' and apért,[3] then would they never fine[4] 280
To do of gentleness the fair office;
They mighten[5] do no villainy or vice.
"Take fire, and bear it into the darkest house
Betwixt this and the Mount of Caucasus,
And let men shut the doorés, and go thenne,[6] 285
Yet will the fire as fairé lie and brenne[7]
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
His office natural aye will it hold,
Up[8] peril of my life, till that it die.
"Here may ye see well how that gentery[9] 290
Is not annexéd to possessión,
Since folk ne do their operatión
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind:[10]
For God it wot, men may full often find
A lordés son do shame and villainy. 295
And he that will have price[11] of his gent'rý,[9]
For[12] he was boren[13] of a gentle house,
And had his elders noble and virtuous,
And will himselven do no gentle deedés,
Ne follow his gentle ancestry that dead is, 300
He is not gentle be he duke or earl,
For villain's sinful deedés make a churl:[14]
For gentleness is but the renomee[15]
Of thine ancéstors for their high bounty,
Which is a strangé thing to thy persón: 305
Thy gentleness cometh from God alone;
Then cometh our very gentleness of grace;
It was no thing bequeath'd us with our place.

[1] Will—wills, orders that, &c. [2] Elders—ancestors. [3] Apert—open. [4] Fine—cease, end. [5] Mighten—would be able. [6] Thenne—thence. [7] Brenne—burn. [8] Up—upon. [9] Gentery—gentility, high birth. [10] In his kind—after its nature. [11] Price—reward, praise. [12] For—because. [13] Borén—born. [14] Churl—one low-born. [15] Renomee—renown.

"Thinketh how noble, as saith Valerius,
Was thilké[1] Tullius Hostilius, 310
That out of povert' rose to high nobless.
Readeth Senec, and readeth eke Boece,
There shall ye see express[2] that it no drede is,[3]
That he is gentle that doth gentle deedés:
And therefore, levé[4] husband, I thus conclude, 315
All be it that mine ancestors were rude,
Yet may the highé God, (and so hope I,)
Granten me grace to liven virtuously;
Then am I gentle when that I begin
To liven virtuously and waiven[5] sin. 320
"And there as ye of povert' me repreve,
The highé God, on whom that we believe,
In wilful povert' chose to lead his life;
And certés every man, maiden, or wife,
May understand that Jesus heaven king 325
Ne would not choose a viciòus living.
"Glad povert' is an honest thing certáin,
This will Senec' and other clerkés sain.
Who so that halt[6] him paid of his povért'
I hold him rich, all had he not a shirt. 330
He that covéteth is a pooré wight,
For he would have that is not in his might;
But he that naught hath, ne covéteth t' have,
Is rich, although ye hold him but a knave.[7]
Very povért' is sinné properly. 335
"Juvenal saith of povert' merrily,
The pooré man when he go'th by the way,
Before the thievés he may sing and play.
Povért' is hateful good; and, as I guess,
A full great bringer out of business;[8] 340
A great amender eke of sapiénce
To him that taketh it in patiénce.
Povert' is this, although it seem elenge,[9]
Possessión that no wight will challénge.
Povért' full often, when a man is low, 345
Maketh his God and eke himself to know.
Povért' a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Through which he may his very friendés see.
And therefore, Sir, sin that I you not grieve,
Of my povérty no more me repreve. 350
"Now, Sir, of eld[10] that ye repreven me:
And certés, Sir, though no authority

[1] Thilke—that same. [2] Express — pointedly, expressly. [3] No drede is—there is no doubt. [4] Leve—dear. [5] Waiven—put aside, forsake. [6] Halt—holdeth. [7] Knave—hireling. [8] Business—turmoil. [9] Elenge, (from the Fr. *éloigné*)—strange. [10] Eld—old age.

Were in no book, ye gentles of honóur
Say, that men should an oldé wight honóur,
And clepe[1] him Father, for your gentleness; 355
And authors shall I finden, as I guess.
"Now there ye say that I am foul and old,
Then dread ye not to be a cokéwold;
For filth, and eld[2] also, (so may I the,)[3]
Be greaté wardens upon chastity. 360
But nathéless, since I know your delight,
I shall fulfil your worldly appetite.
"Choose now (quod she) one of these thingés tway,
To have me foul and old till that I dey,[4]
And be to you a trué humble wife, 365
And never you displease in all my life;
Or ellés will ye have me young and fair,
And take your áventure of the repair[5]
That shall be to your house because of me?

* * * * * *

Now choose yourselven whether that you liketh." 370
This knight aviseth him,[6] and soré siketh,
But at the last he said in this mannére:
"My lady and my love, and wife so dear,
I put me in your wisé governance,
Chooseth yourself which may be most pleasánce 375
And most honóur to you and me also;
I do no force[7] the whether of the two;
For as you liketh, it sufficeth me."
"Then have I got the mastery, quod she,
Since I may choose and govern as me lest."[8] 380
"Yea certés, wife, quod he, I hold it best."
"Kiss me, quod she, we be no longer wroth,
For by my truth I will be to you both;
This is to say, yea, bothé fair and good.
I pray to God that I may starven wood[9] 385
But I to you be all so good and true
As e'er was wife since that the world was new,
And but I be[10] to-morrow' as fair to seen
As any lady, emperess, or queen,
That is betwixt the east and eke the west, 390
Do with my life and death right as you lest.[8]
Cast up the curtain, look how that it is."
And when the knight saw verily all this,

[1] Clepe—call. [2] Eld—old age. [3] So may I the—so may I thrive. [4] Dey—die. [5] Repair—the thronging. [6] Aviseth him—considereth. [7] I do no force—I care not. [8] Lest—pleaseth. [9] Starven wood—die mad. [10] But I be—except I be, or, if I be not.

That she so fair was, and so young thereto,
For joy he hent[1] her in his armés two: 395
His hearté bathéd in a bath of bliss,
A thousand times a-row[2] he 'gan her kiss:
And she obeyéd him in every thing
That mighté do him pleasance or liking.
And thus they live unto their livés end 400
In perfect joy; and Jesú Christ us send
Husbandés meek and young, and fresh[3] a-bed,
And grace to overlive them that we wed.
And eke I pray Jesú to short their lives
That will not be govérnéd by their wives;
And old and angry niggards of dispense,
God send them soon a very pestilence. 407

[1] Hent—took, caught. [2] A-row—in turn. [3] Fresh—sweet.

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limiter, this noble Frere,
He made alway a manner louring cheer[1]
Upon the Som'nour, but for honesty[2]
No villain's word[3] as yet to him spake he;
But at the last he said unto the Wife, 5
"Damé, quod he, God give you right good life,
Ye have here touched, (all so may I the,)[4]
In school mattere a full great difficulty;
Ye have said muchel thing right well I say:
But, Dame, here as we riden by the way 10
Us needeth not to speaken, but of game,
And let[5] authorities, in Goddés name,
To preaching and to school eke of clergy.
"But if it like unto this company
I will you of a Som'nour tell a game; 15
Pardie ye may well knowen by the name
That of a Som'nour may no good be said;
I pray that none of you be evil apaid:[6]
A Sompnour is a runner up and down
With mandéments[7] for fornicatión, 20
And is ybeat at every townés end."
Then spake our Host, "Ah, Sir, ye should be hend[8]
And courteous as a man of your estate,
In company we will have no debate:
Telleth your Tale, and let the Som'nour be." 25
"Nay, quod the Som'nour, let him say by me
What so him list; when it cometh to my lot
By 'Heaven' I shall him quiten every groat;
I shall him tellen what a great honóur
It is to be a flattering limiter, 30
And eke of many another manner crime,
Which needeth not rehearsen at this time,
And his office I shall him tell ywis."[9]
Our Hosté answer'd, "Peace, no more of this."
And afterward he said unto the Frére, 35
"Tell forth your Tale, mine owen master dear."

[1] Manner louring cheer—a sort of louring look. [2] Honesty—good manners. [3] Villain's word—low-bred word. [4] So may I the—so may I prosper. [5] Let—leave. [6] Evil apaid—dissatisfied. [7] Mandements—mandates. [8] Hend—civil. [9] Ywis—assuredly.

"Unto the devil rough and black of hue
Give I thy body and my pan also."—l. 322.

THE FRIAR'S TALE.

WHILOM there was dwelling in my countree
An archédeacon, a man of high degree,
That boldély did executión
In punishing of fornicatión, 40
Of witchcraft, * * * *
Of defamation, and avoutery,[1]
Of churché-revés,[2] and of testaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments,
Of usure, and of simony' also, 45
But cert' 'libértines' did he greatest woe;
They shoulden singen if that they were hent,[3]
And smallé tithers weren foul yshent;[4]

[1] Avoutery—adultery. [2] Churche-reves—churchwardens. [3] Hent—caught. [4] Yshent—damaged.

The Friar's Tale.] A Sompnour and the devil meeting on the way, after conference become sworn brethren, and to hell they go together. A covert invective against the bribery and corruption of the spiritual courts in those days.—*Urry.*

If any person would upon them plain[1]
There might astart them no pecunial pain.[2] 50
For smallé tithés and small offering
He made the people piteously to sing,
For ere the bishop hent[3] them with his crook,
They weren in the archédeacon's book;
Then had he through his jurisdictión 55
Power to do on them correctión.
He had a Som'nour ready to his hand,
A slier boy was none in Engleland;
For subtlely he had his espiaille[4]
That taught him well where it might aught avail. 60
He coudé spare 'a libertine' or two
To teachen them to four-and-twenty mo:
For, though this Som'nour wood[5] be as a hare,
To tell his 'villainy' I will not spare.
For we be out of their correctión, 65
They have of us no jurisdictión,
Ne never shall have, term[6] of all their lives,

* * * * *

"This falsé thief, this Som'nour, quod the Frére,

* * * * *

His master knew not alway what he wan.
Withouten mandément[7] a lewéd[8] man 70
He coudé summ'n up[9] pain of Christés curse,
And they were inly glad to fill his purse,
And maken him great feastés at the nale.[10]
And right as Judas haddé purses smale,[11]
And was a thief, right such a thief was he; 75
His master had but half his duéty.

* * * * *

And so befell that onés on a day
This Som'nour, waiting ever on his prey,
Rode forth to summ'n a widow' an old ribibe,[12]
Feigning a cause, for he would have a bribe; 80

[1] Plain—complain. [2] There might astart, &c.—they were released from no pecuniary troubles. [3] Hent—caught. [4] Espiaille—espionage. [5] Wood—mad. [6] Term of, &c.—to the end of their lives. [7] Mandement—mandate. [8] Lewed—unlettered, ignorant. [9] Up pain—upon pain. [10] Nale—alehouse. *See note.* [11] Smale—small. [12] Ribibe—a musical instrument: probably applied on account of its shrillness to an old woman.

V. 73. *the nale.*] The alehouse, *P. P.* fol. 32, b.;

And than satten some and songe at *the nale.*

It is probably a corruption of *atten ale.*—*Tyr.*

And happened that he saw before him ride
A gay yeomán under a forest side;
A bow he bare, and arrows bright and keen,
He had upon a courtepy[1] of green,
A hat upon his head with fringes black. 85
"Sir, quod the Sompnour, hail, and well atake."[2]
"Welcome, quod he, and every good felláw.
Whither ridest thou under this greené shaw?[3]
(Saidé this yeoman) wilt thou far to day?"
This Som'nour him answérd, and saidé "Nay; 90
Here fasté by (quod he) is mine intent
To riden, for to raisen up a rent
That 'longeth to my lordés duéty."
"Ah! art thou then a bailiff?" "Yea," quod he;
(He dursté not for very filth and shame 95
Say that he was a Som'nour for the name.)
"*De par dieux*, quod this yeoman, levé brother,
Thou art a bailiff, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this countrée;
Of thine acquaintance I will prayen thee, 100
And eke of brotherhood, if that thee lest.
I have gold and silver lying in my chest;
If that thee hap to come in to our shire
All shall be thine, right as thou wilt desire."
"*Grand mercy*, quod this Som'nour, by my faith."
Evereach in other's hand his truthé lay'th 106
For to be sworné brethren till they dey.[4]
In dalliance they riden forth and play.
This Som'nour, which that was as full of jangles,[5]
As full of venom been these wariangles,[6] 110
And ever enquiring upon every thing,
"Brother, quod he, where is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I should you seech?"[7]
This yeoman him answérd in softé speech,
"Brother, quod he, far in the north countrée, 115
Whereas I hope sometime I shall thee see.
Ere we depart I shall thee so well wiss,[8]
That of mine house ne shalt thou never miss."
"Now brother, quod this Som'nour, I you pray
Teach me, while that we riden by the way, 120
(Since that ye be a bailiff, as am I)
Some subtlety, and tell me faithfully
In mine office how I may mosté win;
And spareth not for conscience or for sin,

[1] Courtepy—upper short coat. [2] Well atake—well overtaken. [3] Shaw—shade of trees. [4] Dey — die. [5] Jangles — chattering. [6] Wariangles—bird of prey: from Speght's description, it should be the butcher-bird. [7] Seech—seek. [8] Wiss—inform.

But as my brother tell me how do ye." 125
"Now by my truthé, brother mine, said he,
As I shall tellen thee a faithful Tale.
My wages be full strait and eke full smale :[1]
My lord is hard to me and dangerous,[2]
And mine office is full laborious, 130
And therefore by extortión I live;
Forsoth I take all that men will me give:
Algates[3] by sleighté[4] or by violence
From year to year I win all my dispense:
I can no better tellen faithfully." 135
"Now certés (quod this Som'nour) so fare I;
I sparé not to taken, God it wot,
But if it be too heavy or too hot.
What I may get in counsel privily
No manner consciénce of that have I. 140
N'ere mine extortión I might not liven,[5]
Ne of such japés[6] will I not be shriven.[7]
Stomach nor conscience know I none;
I shrew[8] these shrifty fathers evereach one :
Well be we met by 'Heaven' and by Saint Jame.
But, levé brother, tell me then thy name," 146
Quod this Som'nóur. Right in this meané while
This yeoman 'gan a little for to smile.
"Brother, quod he, wilt thou that I thee tell?
I am a fiend; my dwelling is in hell; 150
And here I ride about my purchasing,
To wot whe'r[9] men will give me any thing:
My purchase is th' effect of all my rent,
Look how thou ridest for the same intent :
To winnen good thou reckest[10] never how: 155
Right so fare I, for riden will I now
Unto the worldés endé for a prey."
"Ah, quod this Som'nour, *benedicite!* what say ye?
I ween'd[11] ye were a yeoman truély,
Ye have a mannés shape as well as I: 160
Have ye then a figúre determinate
In hell, there ye be in your estate?"
"Nay certainly, quod he, there have we none,
But when us liketh we can take us one,
Or ellés make you ween that we be shape[12] 165
Sometime like a man, or like an ape;

[1] Smale—small. [2] Dangerous—difficult, sparing. [3] Algates—however. [4] Sleighte—trick. [5] N'ere mine extortion, &c.—Were it not for my extortion, I could not live. [6] Japes—cheats. [7] Shriven—confessed. [8] Shrew—curse. [9] Whe'r—whether. [10] Reckest—carest. [11] Ween'd—guessed. [12] Shape—shapen, formed.

Or like an angel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be so;
A lousy jugélour can deceiven thee,
And par dié, yet can[1] I more craft than he." 170
"Why, quod the Sompnour, ride ye then or gone
In sundry shape, and not alway in one?"
"For[2] we, quod he, will us such formé make
As most is able our preyé for to take."
"What maketh you to have all this labóur?" 175
"Full many' a causé, levé[3] Sir Som'nóur,
Saidé this fiend. But allé thing hath time;
The day is short, and it is passéd prime,[4]
And yet ne won I nothing in this day;
I will intend[5] to winning if I may, 180
And not intend our thingés to declare;
For, brother mine, thy wit is all too bare
To understand, although I told them thee.
But for[2] thou askest why labóuren we?
For[2] sometime we be Goddés instruments, 185
And meanés to do his commandéments,
When that he list, upon his creátures,
In divers acts and in divérse figúres:
Withouten him we have no might[6] certain,
If that he list[7] to standen theragain. 190
And some time at our prayér have we leave
Only the body and not the soul to grieve;
Witness on Job, whom that we diden woe,
And sometime have we might on bothé two,
This is to say, on soul and body eke: 195
And sometime be we suffered for to seek
Upon a man, and do his soul unrest
And not his body, and all is for the best.
When he withstandeth our temptatión
It is a cause of his salvatión, 200
All be it that it was not our intent
He should be safe, but that we would him hent.[8]
And sometime be we servants unto man,
As to the Archébishop Saint Dunstan,
And to the apostle, servant eke was I." 205
"Yet tell me, quod this Som'nour, faithfully,
Make ye you new bodies thus alway
Of elements?" The fiend answéréd "Nay.
Sometime we feign, and sometime we arise
With dead bodies, in full sundry wise, 210

[1] Can—know. [2] For—because. [3] Leve—dear. [4] Prime—first quarter. [5] Intend—apply. [6] Might—power. [7] If that he list, &c.—*i. e.* if he choose to stand against, or, to resist us. [8] Hent—catch.

And speak as renably,[1] and fair, and well,
As to the Pythoness did Samuel;
And yet will some men say it was not he:
I do no force of your divinity.[2]
But one thing warn I thee; I will not jape;[3] 215
Thou wilt algatés[4] weet[5] how we be shape:
Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dear,
Come where thee needeth not of me to lere;[6]
For thou shalt, by thine own experience,
Conne[7] in a chaiér red of this sentence 220
Bet[8] than Virgil, while he was on live;
Or Dant also. Now let us riden blive,[9]
For I will holden company with thee
Till it be so that thou forsaké me."
"Nay, quod this Som'nour, that shall ne'er betide.
I am yeoman, knowen is full wide; 226
My truthé will I hold, as in this case;
For though thou were the devil Sathanas,
My truthé will I hold to thee, my brother,
As I have sworn, and each of us to other, 230
For to be trué brethren in this case,
And both we go abouten our purcháse.
Take thou thy part, what that men will thee give,
And I shall mine, thus may we bothé live;
And if that any of us have more than other 235
Let him be true, and part it with his brother."
"I granté, quod the devil, by my fay,"[10]
And with that word they riden forth their way,
And right at ent'ring of the townés end
To which this Som'nour shope[11] him for to wend,[12]
They saw a cart that chargéd was with hay, 241
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.
Deep was the way, for which the carté stood;
The carter smote, and cried as he were wood,[13]
"Heit Scot! heit Brok! what, spare ye for the stones?
The fiend (quod he) you fetché body' and bones, 246
As farforthly as ever ye were foled,
So muchel woe as I have with you tholed.[14]
The devil have all, both horse, and cart, and hay."
The Som'nour said, "Here shall we have a prey;"
And near the fiend he drew, as naught ne were,[15] 251
Full privily, and rounéd[16] in his ear,

[1] Renably—reasonably. [2] I do no force of, &c.—I heed not your divinity. [3] Jape—jest. [4] Algates—nevertheless. [5] Weet—know. [6] Lere—learn. [7] Conne—learn. [8] Bet—better. [9] Blive—briskly. [10] Fay—faith. [11] Shope—prepared. [12] Wend—go. [13] Wood—mad. [14] Tholed—endured. [15] Nought ne were—nothing were the matter. [16] Rouned—whispered.

"Harken my brother, harken, by thy faith;
Hearest thou not how that the carter saith?
Hent[1] it anon, for he hath given it thee, 255
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples[2] three."
"Nay, quod the devil, God wot never a deal;[3]
It is not his intent, trust thou me well:
Ask him thyself, if thou not trowest[4] me,
Or ellés stint[5] a while and thou shalt see." 260
This carter thwacketh his horse upon the croup,
And they began to drawen and to stoop.
"Heit now, quod he; there, Jesu Christ you bless,
And all his handy-work both more and less!
That was well twight,[6] my owén Líard[7] boy, 265
I pray God save thy body' and Saint Eloy.
Now is my cart out of the slough pardie."
"Lo, brother, quod the fiend, what told I thee?
Here may ye see, mine owen dear brother,
The churl spake one thing but he thought another.
Let us go forth abouten our voyáge; 271
Here win I nothing upon this carriáge."
When that they comen somewhat out of town
This Som'nour to his brother 'gan to roun;[8]
"Brother, quod he, here wonneth an old rebeck[9] 275
That had almost as lief to lose her neck
As for to give a penny of her good.
I will have twelve pence though that she be wood,[10]
Or I will summon her to our office,
And yet, God wot, of her know I no vice; 280
But for thou canst not as in this countrée
Winnen thy cost, take here example of me."
This Som'nour clappeth at the widow's gate;
"Come out, he said, thou oldé very trate;[11]
I trow[12] thou hast some frére or priest with thee."
"Who clappeth? said this wife; *benedicite!* 286
God save you, Sir, what is your sweeté will?"
"I have, quod he, of summons here a bill:
Up[13] pain of cursing, looké that thou be
To-morrow before the archédeacon's knee, 290
To answer to the court of certain things."
"Now Lord, quod she, Christ Jesu, King of kings,

[1] Hent—lay hold of. [2] Caples—horses. [3] God wot never a deal—God knows not a bit of it. [4] Trowest—believest. [5] Stint—stop. [6] Twight—dragged, pulled. [7] Liard—grey: a familiar name for a grey horse, as *bayard* was for a bay one. [8] Roun—mutter. [9] Rebeck—fiddle. [10] Wood—mad. [11] Trate—qy. trot; a term commonly used for old women. [12] Trow—guess. [13] Up—upon.

So wisely[1] helpé me as I ne may:[2]
I have been sick, and that full many a day:
I may not go so far (quod she) nor ride 295
But I be dead, so pricketh it in my side.
May I not ask a libel, Sir Som'nóur,
And answer there by my procúrator
To suché thing as men would apposen[3] me?"
"Yes, quod the Som'nour, pay anon, let see, 300
Twelve pence to me, and I will thee acquit:
I shall no profit have thereby but lit;[4]
My master hath the profit and not I.
Come off, and let me riden hastily;
Give me twelve pence, I may no longer tarry." 305
"Twelve pence! quod she; now Lady Saint Mary
So wisely[1] help me out of care and sin,
This widé world though that I should it win,
Ne have I not twelve pence within my hold.
Ye knowen well that I am poor and old; 310
Kith your almess[5] upon me pooré wretch."
"Nay then, quod he, the foulé fiend me fetch
If I thee' excuse, though thou shouldést be spilt."[6]
"Alas! quod she, God wot I have no guilt."
"Pay me, quod he, or by the sweet Saint Anne
As I will bear away thy newé pan 316
For debté which thou owest me of old."

* * * * *

"Thou liest, quod she, by my salvatión;
Ne was I ne'er ere now, widow or wife,
Summon'd unto your court in all my life, 320
Ne never I was but of my body true.
Unto the devil rough and black of hue
Give I thy body and my pan also."
And when the devil heard her cursen so
Upon her knees, he said in this mannere; 325
"Now Mabily, my owen mother dear,
Is this your will in earnest that ye say?"
"The devil, quod she, so fetch him ere he dey,[7]
And pan and all, but he will[8] him repent."
"Nay, oldé stoat,[9] that is not mine intent, 330
Quod this Som'nóur, for to repenten me
For anything that I have had of thee:
I would I had thy 'frock' and every cloth."
"Now brother, quod the devil, be not wroth;

[1] Wisely—surely. [2] Ne may—am not able. [3] Apposen—lay charge to. [4] Lit—little. [5] Kith your almess—manifest, show your charity. [6] Spilt—ruined. [7] Dey—die. [8] But he will—unless he will. [9] Stoat—a polecat.

Thy body and this pan be mine by right: 335
Thou shalt with me to hellé yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our privity
More than a master of divinity."
And with that word the foulé fiend him hent[1]
Body and soul: he with the devil went 340
Where as these Som'nours have their heritage:
And God, that makéd after his imáge
Mankind, save and guide us all and some,
And lene[2] this Som'nour good man to become.
"Lordings, I could have told you (quod this Frere)
Had I had leisure for this Som'nour here, 346
After the text of Christ, and Paul, and John,
And of our other doctors many one,
Such peinés that your heartés might agrise,[3]
Al-be-it so that no tongue may devise, 350
Though that I might a thousand winter tell,
The pains of thilké cursed house of hell:
But for to keep us from that cursed place
Waketh and prayeth[4] Jesu of his grace
So keep us from the tempter Sathanas. 355
Hearkeneth this word, beware as in this case;
The lion sit in his await alway
To slay the innocent if that he may.
Disposeth aye your heartés to withstond
The fiend, that you would maken thrall and bond;
He may not tempten you over your might, 361
For Christ will be your champion and your knight;
And prayeth that this Som'nour him repent
Of his misdeedés ere that the fiend him hent." 364

[1] Hent—caught. [2] Lene—grant. [3] Agrise—shudder. [4] Prayeth, *imp. mood*,—watch and pray.

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

"SIR Clerk of Oxenford, our Hosté said,
Ye ride as still and coy as doth a maid
Were newé spouséd, sitting at the board;
This day ne heard I of your tongue a word.
I trow ye study abouten some sophíme;[1] 5
But Solomon saith that every thing hath time.
For Goddés sake as be of better cheer,
It is no timé for to studien here.
Tell us some merry Talé by your fay;[2]
For, what man that is entered in a play, 10
He needés must unto the play assent.
But preacheth not, as friars do in Lent,
To make us for our oldé sinnés weep;
Ne that thy Talé make us not to sleep.
"Tell us some merry thing of áventures; 15
Your termés, your colóurs, and your figúres,
Keep them in storé till so be y' endite
High style, as when that men to kingés write.
Speaketh so plain at this time, I you pray,
That we may understanden what ye say." 20
This worthy Clerk benignély answér'd;
"Hosté, quod he, I am under your yard,[3]
Ye have of us as now the governance,
And therefore would I do you obéysance,
As far as reason asketh hardily:[4] 25
I will you tell a Talé which that I
Learnéd at Padow[5] of a worthy clerk,
As provéd by his wordés and his work:
He is now dead and nailéd in his chest,
I pray to God so give his soulé rest. 30

[1] Sophime—sophism. [2] Fay—faith. [3] Yard—staff, or wand of direction. [4] Hardily—boldly. [5] Padow—Padua.

V. 3. *Were newe spoused.*] It has been observed in note upon ver. 807, *Prologue*, that Chaucer frequently omits the governing pronoun before his verbs: the instances there cited were of personal pronouns. In this line, and in the *Canon's Yeoman's Prol.* 27, the relative *who* or *which* is omitted in the same manner. —*Tyr.*

"Francis Petrarc, the Laureat poet,
Highté[1] this clerk, whose rhetóric sweet
Enlumin'd all Itáille of poetry,
As Linian did of philosophy,
Or law, or other art particulere: 35
But Death, that will not suffer us dwellen here,
But, as it were, a twinkling of an eye,
Them both hath slain, and allé we shall die.
"But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughté me this Tale as I began, 40
I say that first he with high style enditeth
(Ere he the body of his Talé writeth)
A proem, in the which describeth he
Piedmont, and of Salucés[2] the country,
And speaketh of Apenine the hillés high, 45
That be the boundés of west Lumbardy,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where as the Po out of a wellé[3] small
Taketh his firsté springing and his source,
That eastward aye increaseth in his course 50
To Emfly ward, to Ferrare and Venfce,
The which a longé thing were to devise;
And truély, as to my judgément,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he will conveyen his mattere:" 55
But this is the Tale, which that ye may hear.

[1] Highte—was called. [2] Saluces—Saluzzo. [3] Welle—spring.

V. 34. *Linian.*] Or *Lignan.* The person meant was an eminent lawyer, and made a great noise (as we say) in his time. He was not, however, a mere lawyer; Chaucer speaks of him as excelling also in *philosophy*; and so does his epitaph, *ap. Pansirol*, l. c.;

* * * *

Gloria *Lignani*, titulo decoratus utroque,
Legibus et sacro Canone dives erat,
Alter Aristoteles, Hippocras erat et Ptolomæus—

In the printed epitaph he is said to have died in 1368, 16th February. —*Tyr.*

V. 40. *The Story of Griselda*—written by Boccaccio—was the favourite of his beloved friend, Petrarca.

V. 51. *To Emily ward.*] One of the regions of Italy was called Æmilia, from the *Via Æmilia*, which crossed it from Placentia to Rimini.

"Grisild', he said, ye shall well understand,
It liketh to your father and to me
That I you wed."—l. 344.

THE CLERK'S TALE.

THERE is right at the west side of Itaille,
Down at the root of Vesulus the cold,
A lusty[1] plain abundant of vitaille,
There many a town and tow'r thou may'st behold, 60
That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another délitable sight,
And Saluces this noble country hight.
A marquis whilom lord was of that land,
As were his worthy elders[2] him before; 65
And obeisant, aye ready to his hand,
Were all his lieges bothé less and more:
Thus in delight he liveth, and hath done yore,[3]
Belov'd and dread, through favour of Fortúne,
Both of his lordés and of his commúne.[4] 70

[1] Lusty—pleasant. [2] Elders—ancestors. [3] Yore—long ago. [4] Commune—commonalty.

The Clerk's Tale.] Walter the Marquis of Saluce proveth the patience of his wife Grisilda by three most sharp trials.—*Urry.*

Therewith he was, to speaken of lin'age,
The gentlilest yborn of Lumbardy,
A fairé person, and strong, and young of age,
And full of honour and of courtesy;
Discreet enough, his country for to gie,[1] 75
Save in some thingés that he was to blame,
And Walter was this youngé lordés name.
I blame him thus, that he consider'd naught
In timé coming what might him betide,[2]
But on his lust presént[3] was all his thought, 80
And for to hawk and hunt on every side;
Well nigh all other carés let he slide;
And eke he n'old[4] (and that was worst of all)
Wedden no wife for aught that might befall.
Only that point his people bare so sore, 85
That flockmel[5] on a day to him they went,
And one of them, that wisest was of lore,
(Or ellés[6] that the lord would best assent
That he should tell him what the people meant,
Or ellés could he well show such mattére) 90
He to the marquis said as ye shall hear.
"O noble Marquis! your humanity
Assureth us and giveth us hardiness,[7]
As oft as time is of necessity
That we to you may tell our heaviness; 95
Accepteth, Lord, then of your gentleness
That we with piteous heart unto you plain,[8]
And let your earés not my voice disdain.
"All[9] have I not to do in this mattére
More than another man hath in this place, 100
Yet for as much as ye, my Lord so dear,
Have alway showéd me favóur and grace,
I dare the better ask of you a space
Of audience to showen our request,
And ye, my Lord, to do right as you lest.[10] 105
"For certés, Lord, so well us liketh you
And all your work, and e'er have done, that we
Ne coulden not ourself devisen how
We mighten live in more felicity,
Save one thing, Lord, if it your willé be 110
That for to be a wedded man you lest,[10]
Then were your people in sovereign heartés rest.

[1] Gie—guide. [2] What might him betide—what in future might befall him. [3] Lust present—immediate gratification. [4] N'old—would not. [5] Flockmel—together in a flock. [6] Or elles that—either that. [7] Hardiness—boldness. [8] Plain—complain. [9] All—although. [10] Lest—please.

"Boweth your necké under the blissful yoke
Of sovéreignty, and not of servíce,
Which that men clepen Spousaile or Wedlock: 115
And thinketh, Lord, among your thoughtés wise,
How that our dayés pass in sundry wise;
For though we sleep, or wake, or roam, or ride,
Aye fle'th the time, it will no man abide.
"And though your greené youthé flow'r as yet, 120
In creepeth age alway as still as stone,
And death menáceth every age, and smit[1]
In each estate, for there escapeth none:
And all so certain as we know each one
That we shall die, as uncertáin we all 125
Be of that day when death shall on us fall.
"Accepteth then of us the true intent,
That never yet refuseden your hest,[2]
And we will, Lord, if that ye will assent,
Choose you a wife in short time at the mest[3] 130
Born of the gentilest and of the best
Of all this land, so that it oughté seem
Honóur to God and you, as we can deem.
"Deliver us out of all this busy drede,[4]
And take a wife for highé Goddés sake; 135
For if it so befell, as God forbid,
That through your death your lineage should slake,
And that a strangé súccessor should take
Your heritage, O! woe were us on live;[5]
Wherefore we pray you hastily to wive." 140
Their meeké prayér and their piteous cheer
Madé the marquis for to have pitý.
"Ye will, quod he, mine owen people dear,
To that I ne'er ere thought, constrainen me:
I me rejoicéd of my liberty, 145
That seldom time is found in marriáge;
There[6] I was free, I musté be in servage.
"But nathéless I see your true intent,
And trust upon your wit, and have done aye;
Wherefore of my free will I will assent 150
To wedden me as soon as ever' I may:
But there[6] as ye have proffer'd me to-day
To choosen me a wife, I you release
That choice, and pray you of that proffer cease.

[1] Smit — (for) smiteth. [2] Hest — command. [3] Mest — most. [4] Drede—fear. [5] Us on live—woe to us survivors, or, who are alive. [6] There—(for) where: the reader must have perceived before this, that the adverb "there" is constantly substituted for "where."

"For God it wot that children often been 155
Unlike their worthy elders[1] them before:
Bounty com'th all of God, not of the strene[2]
Of which they been ygend'red and ybore:
I trust in Goddés bounty, and therefore
My marriáge, and mine estate, and rest, 160
I him betake;[3] he may do as him lest.[4]
"Let me alone in choosing of my wife;
That charge upon my back I will endure:
But I you pray and charge upon your life
That what wife that I take, ye may assure 165
To worship her, while that her life may dure,
In word and work both here and ellés where,
As she an emperorés daughter were.
"And farthermore this shall ye swear, that ye
Against my choice shall never grutch or strive; 170
For since I shall forego my liberty
At your request, as ever may I thrive
There as mine heart is set there will I wive:
And, but[5] ye will assent in such manner,
I pray you speak no more of this matter." 175
With heartly will they sworen and assenten
To all this thing, there said not one wight nay;
Beseeching him of grace, ere that they wenten,
That he would granten them a certain day
Of his spousal as soon as ever' he may, 180
For yet alway the people somewhat dread
Lest that this marquis wouldé no wife wed.
He granted them a day, such as him lest,[6]
On which he would be wedded sikerly,[7]
And said he did all this at their request; 185
And they with humble heart full buxomly,[8]
Kneeling upon their knees full reverently,
Him thanken all: and thus they have an end
Of their intent, and home again they wend.
And hereupon he to his officers 190
Commandeth for the feasté to purvey,
And to his privy knightés and squiérs
Such charge he gave as he lest[6] on them lay,
And they to his commandément obey,
And each of them doth all his diligence 195
To do unto the feast all reverence.

[1] Elders—ancestors. [2] Strene—stock, progeny. [3] I him betake—I commend to him. [4] Lest—pleases. [5] But—unless. [6] Lest—chose. [7] Sikerly—certainly. [8] Buxomly—obediently.

Pars Secunda.

Naught far from thilké[1] palace honourâble,
Where as this marquis shope[2] his marriâge,
There stood a thorp,[3] of sité delectâble,
In which that pooré folk of that villâge 200
Hadden their beastés and their harbourgage,[4]
And of their labour take their sustenance,
Aftér that[5] th' earthé gave them âbundance.
Among this pooré folk there dwelt a man
Which that was holden poorest of them all, 205
But highé God sometimé senden can
His grace unto a little ox's stall;
Janicola, men of that thorp him call:
A daughter had he fair enough to sight,
And Grisildis this youngé maiden hight. 210
But for to speak of virtuous beauty,
Then was she one the fairest under sun.
Full poorély yfostered up was she;
No likerous[6] lust was in her heart yrun:
Well ofter of the well than of the tun 215
She drank; and for[7] she wouldé virtue please,
She knew well labour but no idle ease.
But though this maiden tender were of age,
Yet in the breast of her virginity
There was encloséd sad[8] and ripe couráge, 220
And in great reverence and charity
Her oldé pooré father foster'd she:
A few sheep spinning on the field she kept;
She wouldé not be idle till she slept.
And when she homeward came she wouldé bring
Wortés[9] and other herbés timés oft, 226
The which she shred and seeth'd for her living,
And made her bed full hard and nothing soft;
And aye she kept her father's life on loft[10]
With every obeisance and diligence 230
That child may do to father's reverence.
Upon Grisild', this pooré creâture,
Full often sith[11] this marquis set his eye,
As he on hunting rode paráventure;
And when it fell that he might her espy 235
He not with wanton looking of folly
His eyen cast on her, but in sad[8] wise
Upon her cheer[12] he would him oft avise;[13]

[1] Thilke—that same. [2] Shope — prepared. [3] Thorp—village. [4] Harbourgage—dwelling. [5] After that—according as. [6] Likerous—gluttonous. [7] For—because. [8] Sad—grave, steady. [9] Wortes—cabbages. [10] On loft—up, aloft. [11] Sith—times. [12] Cheer—countenance, conduct. [13] Avise—consider.

Commending in his heart her womanhede,[1]
And eke her virtue, passing any wight 240
Of so young age as well in cheer [2] as deed :
For though the people have no great insight
In virtue, he consideréd full right
Her bounty, and disposéd [3] that he would .
Wed her only if ever he wedden should. 245
The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tellen what woman that it shouldé be,
For which marveillé wondr'd many a man,
And saiden, when they were in privity,
"Will not our lord yet leave his vanity? 250
Will he not wed? Alas, alas the while!
Why will he thus himself and us beguile?"
But nathéless this marquis hath done make [4]
Of gemmés set in gold and in azúre
Brooches and ringés, for Grisilda's sake; 255
And of her clothing took he the measúre
Of a maiden like unto her stature,
And eke of other ornamentés all
That unto such a wedding shouldé fall.
The time of undern of the samé day 260
Approacheth that this wedding shouldé be,
And all the palace put was in array,
Both hall and chambers, each in his degree,
Houses of office stuffed with plenty;
There may'st thou see of dainteous vitaille 265
That may be found as far as lasteth Itaille.
This royal marquis richély array'd,
Lordés and ladies in his company,
The which unto the feasté weren pray'd,
And of his retinue the bach'lery, 270
With many a sound of sundry melody,
Unto the village of the which I told
In this array the righté way they hold.
Grisild' of this (God wot) full innocent
That for her shapen was all this array, 275
To fetchen water at a well is went,
And cometh home as soon as e'er she may;
For well she had heard say that thilké [5] day

[1] Womanhede—feminine qualities. [2] Cheer—countenance, conduct. [3] Disposed—resolved. [4] Done make—ordered to be made. [5] Thilke—that same.

V. 260. *The time of undern.*] The Glossary explains this rightly to mean the third hour of the day, or nine of the clock. In Chaucer's time the third hour, or *undern*, was the usual hour of dinner.—*Tyr-*

The marquis shouldé wed, and if she might
She wouldé fain[1] have seen some of that sight. 280
She thought, "I will with other maidens stond,
That be my fellows, in our door, and see
The marchioness, and thereto will I fond[2]
To do at home, as soon as it may be,
The labour which that 'longeth unto me, 285
And then I may at leisure her behold,
If she this way unto the Castle hold."
And as she wouldé over the threshold gone,
The marquis came and 'gan her for to call;
And she set down her water-pot anon 290
Beside the threshold in an ox's stall,
And down upon her knees she 'gan to fall,
And with sad[3] countenance kneeleth still,
Till she had heard what was the lordés will.
This thoughtful marquis spake unto this maid 295
Full soberly, and said in this mannere;
"Where is your father, Grísildis?" he said.
And she with reverence in humble cheer
Answeréd; "Lord, he is already here."
And in she go'th withouten longer let[4] 300
And to the marquis she her father fet.[5]
He by the hand then took this pooré man,
And saidé thus when he him had aside;
"Janicola, I neither may nor can
Longer the pleasure of mine hearté hide; 305
If that thou vouchésafe, what so betide;
Thy daughter will I take, ere that I wend,
As for my wife unto her livés end.
"Thou lovest me, that wot I well certáin,
And art my faithful liegéman ybore, 310
And all that liketh me, I dare well sain,
It liketh thee, and 'specially therefore
Tell me that point that I have said before,
If that thou wilt unto this purpose draw,
To taken me as for thy son in law?" 315
This sudden case[6] this man astonied so
That red he wax'd, abash'd, and all quaking
He stood; unnethes[7] said he wordés mo,
But only thus; "Lord, quod he, my willing
Is as ye will, nor against your liking 320
I will no thing, mine owen Lord so dear;
Right as you list, govérneth this mattere."
"Then will I, quod this marquis softély,
That in thy chamber I, and thou, and she,

[1] Fain—gladly. [2] Fond—strive. [3] Sad—steady. [4] Let—delay.
[5] Fet—fetched. [6] Case—event. [7] Unnethes—scarcely.

Have a collatión ;[1] and wot'st[2] thou why? 325
For I will ask her if it her will be
To be my wife, and rule her after me?[3]
And all this shall be done in thy presénce;
I will not speak out of thine audience."
And in the chamber, while they were about 330
The treaty, which as ye shall after hear,
The people came into the house without,
And wond'red them in how honést mannére
Intentively she kept her father dear:
But utterly Grisildis wonder might, 335
For never erst[4] ne saw she such a sight.
No wonder is though that she be astonied
To see so great a guest come in that place;
She never was to none such guestés wonned,[5]
For which she lookéd with full palé face. 340
But shortly forth this matter for to chace,[6]
These are the wordés that the marquis said
To this benigné very faithful maid.
"Grisild', he said, ye shall well understand,
It liketh to your father and to me 345
That I you wed, and eke it may so stand,
As I suppose, ye will that it so be:
But these demandés ask I first (quod he)
That since it shall be done in hasty wise
Will ye assent, or ellés you avise?[7] 350
"I say this, be ye ready with good heart
To all my lust,[8] and that I freely may,
As me best thinketh, do you laugh[9] or smart,
And never ye to grutchen, night or day,
And eke when I say Yea, ye say not Nay, 355
Neither by word nor frowning countenance?
Swear this, and here I swear our álliance."
Wond'ring upon this thing, quaking for dread,
She saidé; "Lord, indigne and unworthy
Am I to thilk'[10] honóur that ye me bid, 360
But as ye will yourself, right so will I:
And here I swear that never willingly
In work nor thought I will you disobey
For to be dead, though me were loth to die."
"This is enough, Grisilda mine, quod he. 365
And forth he go'th with a full sober cheer
Out at the door, and after then came she,

[1] Collation—conference. [2] Wot'st—wottest, knowest. [3] Rule her after me—*i. e.* govern herself according to my direction. [4] Erst—before. [5] Wonned—accustomed. [6] Chace—dismiss. [7] You avise—advise yourself, consider of it. [8] Lust—pleasure. [9] Do you laugh—cause you to laugh. [10] Thilke—this same.

And to the people he said in this mannére;
"This is my wife, quod he, that standeth here;
Honóureth her, and loveth her, I pray, 370
Who so me loveth; there n'is no more to say."
And for[1] that nothing of her oldé geer
She shouldé bring into his house, he bade
That women should despoilen her right there;
Of which these ladies weren nothing glad 375
To handle' her clothés wherein she was clad:
But nathéless this maiden bright of hue
From foot to head they clothéd have all new.
Her hairés have they comb'd that lay untresséd
Full rudély, and with their fingers small 380
A coroune on her head they have ydresséd,
And set her full of nouches[2] great and small.
Of her array what should I make a tale?
Unneth[3] the people' her knew for her fairness
When she transmewéd[4] was in such richess. 385
This marquis hath her spouséd with a ring
Brought for the samé cause, and then her set
Upon a horse snow-white and well ambling,
And to his palace, ere he longer let,[5]
(With joyful people that her led and met) 390
Conveyéd her; and thus the day they spend
In revel till the sunné 'gan descend.
And shortly, forth this Talé for to chace,
I say that to this newé marchioness
God hath such favour sent her of his grace, 395
That it ne seemeth not by likeliness
That she was born and fed in rudéness,

[1] For—because. [2] Nouches—an ornament of dress. *See notes below.* [3] Unneth—scarcely. [4] Transmewed—transformed. [5] Let—delayed.

V. 382. *full of nouches.*] The common reading is *ouches*, but I have retained the reading of the best MSS. as it may possibly assist somebody to discover the meaning of the word. I observe too that it is so written in the inventory of the effects of H. V. *Rot. Parl.* 2 H. VI. n. 31; "Item 6 broches et *nouches* d'or garniz de divers garnades pois 31d. d'or pris 35s.—*Tyr.*

It is probable, I think, that *nouche* is the true word, and that *ouche* has been introduced by a corruption the reverse of that which has been taken notice of in *Nale*, (l. 73, *Friar's Tale*). See Du Cange in v. *Nochia* and *Nusca*, and Schilter, Gloss. Teut. in v. *Nuasci*; from whence it appears that *Nuschin*, Teut. signifies *fibula*, a clasp or buckle. As these were some of the most useful instruments of dress, they were probably some of the first that were ornamented with jewels; by which means the name by degrees may have been extended so as to include several other sorts of jewels: the same thing may have happened in the case of the word *brooche*, which indeed seems originally to have been a French expression for *nouche.*—*Gloss.*

As in a cot or in an ox's stall,
But nourish'd in an emperorés hall.
To every wight she waxen is so dear 400
And worshipful, that folk there [1] she was bore,
And from her birthé knew her year by year,
Unnethes trowéd [2] they, but durst have swore
That to Janicle', of which I spake before,
She daughter n'as ; [3] for as by cónjecture 405
Them thought she was another creáture.
For though that ever virtuous was she,
She was encreaséd in such excellence
Of thewés [4] good, yset in high bountý,
And so discreet, and fair of eloquence, 410
So bénign, and so digne of reverence,
And couldé so the people's heart embrace,
That each her lov'th that looketh on her face.
Not only of Salúces in the town
Publishéd was the bounty of her name, 415
But eke beside in many a región ;
If one saith well, another saith the same :
So spreadeth of her high bounty the fame,
That men and women, young as well as old,
Gone to Saluces upon her to behold. 420
Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
Wedded with fortúnate honesteté,
In Goddés peace liveth full easily
At home, and grace enough outward had he :
And for [5] he saw that under low degree 425
Was honest virtue hid, the people' him held
A prudent man, and that is seen full seld.
Not only this Grisildis through her wit
Could all the feat [6] of wifely homeliness,
But eke when that the case requiréd it, 430
The common profit couldé she redress :
Thére n'as discord, rancóur, or heaviness,
In all the land that she ne could appease,
And wisely bring them all in heartés ease.
Though that her husband absent were or non 435
If gentlemen or other of that countrý
Were wroth, she wouldé bringen them at one.[7]
So wise and ripé wordés haddé she,
And judgément of so great equity,
That she from heaven sent was, as men ween'd 440
People to save, and every wrong to' amend.

[1] There—in the place where. [2] Unnethes trowed—scarcely believed. [3] N'as—was not. [4] Thewes—qualities. [5] For—because. [6] Feat—act, performance. [7] At one—united, to accord.

Not longé time after that this Grisild'
Was wedded, she a daughter hath ybore;
All had her lever'[1] had born a knavé child:[2]
Glad was the marquis and his folk therefore; 445
For though a maiden child come all before,
She may unto a knavé child[2] attain,
By likelihood, since she n'is not barrén.

Pars Tertia.

There fell, as it befalleth timés mo,
When that this child had suckéd but a throw,[3] 450
This marquis in his hearté longéd so
To tempt his wife, her sadness[4] for to know,
That he ne might out of his hearté throw
This marvellous desire his wife t'assay:[5]
Needless, God wot, he thought her to affray.[6] 455
He had assayéd her enough before,
And found her ever good: what needeth it
Her for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though some men praise it for a subtle wit;
But as for me, I say that evil it fit[7] 460
T'assay a wife when that it is no need,
And putten her in anguish and in drede.[8]
For which this marquis wrought in this mannere:
He came a-night, alone there as she lay,
With sterné face and with full troubled cheer,[9] 465
And saidé thus; "Grisild', (quod he) that day
That I you took out of your poor array,
And put you in estate of high nobless,
Ye have it not forgotten, as I guess;
"I say, Grisild', this present dignity, 470
In which that I have put you, as I trow,[10]
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you took in poor estate full low,
For any weal ye must yourselven know.
Take heed of every word that I you say, 475
There is no wight that hear'th it but we tway.
"Ye wot yourself well how that ye came here
Into this house, it is not long ago;
And though to me ye be right lief[11] and dear,
Unto my gentles ye be nothing so: 480
They say, to them it is great shame and woe

[1] Lever—rather. [2] Knave child, (Sax. *knabe*, boy,)—male child. [3] Throw—little while. [4] Sadness—steadiness. [5] Assay—put to trial. [6] Affray—alarm, disturb. [7] Fit—befitteth. [8] Drede—dread. [9] Troubled cheer—troubled, disturbed countenance. [10] Trow—suppose, presume. [11] Lief—pleasant.

'or to be suggetés,[1] and be in servage.
To thee, that born art of a small lineage.
" And namely, since thy daughter was ybore, 485
These wordés have they spoken doubtéless;
But I desire, as I have done before,
To live my life with them in rest and peace:
I may not in this case be reckéless:
I must do with thy daughter for the best, 490
Not as I would, but as my gentles lest.[2]
" And yet, God wot, this is full loth to me:
But nathéless withouten your weeting[3]
I will naught do; but this will I (quod he) 495
That ye to me assenten in this thing;
Show now your patience in your working,
That ye me hight[4] and swore in your villáge,
The day that makéd was our marriáge."
When she had heard all this, she, not ameved[5] 500
Neither in word, in cheer, or countenance,
(For as it seeméd she was not agrievéd)
She saidé; " Lord, all li'th in your pleasánce;
My child and I with heartly' obeísance
Be yourés all, and ye may save or spill[6] 505
Your owen thing: worketh after your will.
" There may no thing, so God my soulé save,
Like unto you that may displeasen me;
Ne I desiré nothing for to have,
Ne dreadé for to lose, save only ye: 510
This will is in my heart, and aye shall be;
No length of time or death may this deface,
Nor change my courage to another place."
Glad was this marquis for her answering,
But yet he feignéd as he were not so; 515
All dreary was his cheer[7] and his looking,
When that he should out of the chamber go.
Soon after this, a furlong way or two,
He privily hath told all his intent
Unto a man, and to his wife him sent. 520
A manner[8] sergeant was this private man,
The which he faithful often founden had
In thingés great, and eke such folk well can
Do execution on thingés bad;
The lord knew well that he him loved and drad.[9]
And when this sergeant wist his lordés will,
Into the chamber he stalkéd him full still.

[1] Suggetes—subjects. [2] Lest—wish. [3] Weeting—knowl
[4] Hight—promised. [5] Ameved—moved. [6] Spill—throw awa
stroy. [7] Cheer—behaviour. [8] Manner—kind of. [9] Drad—dr

"Madam, he said, ye must forgive it me,
Though I do thing to which I am constrainéd;
Ye be so wise, that right well knowen ye
That lordés hestés[1] may not be yfeignéd;
They may well be bewailéd and complainéd, 530
But men must needés to their lust[2] obey,
And so will I; there is no more to say.
"This child I am commanded for to take."
And spake no more, but out the child he hent[3]
Despiteously,[4] and 'gan a cheer[5] to make, 535
As though he would have slain it ere he went.
Grisildis must all suffer and all consent;
And as a lamb she sitteth meek and still,
And let this cruel sergeant do his will.
Suspicious was the diffame[6] of this man, 540
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
Suspect the time in which he this began:
Alas! her daughter, that she lovéd so,
She ween'd[7] he would have slaién it right tho;[8]
But nathéless she neither wept nor sikéd,[9] 545
Conforming her to that the marquis likéd.
But at the last to speaken she began,
And meekély she to the sergeant pray'd
(So as he was[10] a worthy gentleman)
That she might kiss her child ere that it died; 550
And in her barme[11] this little child she laid
With full sad face, and 'gan the child to bliss,
And lulléd it, and after 'gan it kiss.
And thus she said in her benigné voice;
"Farewell, my child, I shall thee never see, 555
But since I have thee markéd with the cross,
Of thilké father yblesséd may'st thou be,
That for us died upon a cross of tree.
Thy soulé, little child, I him betake,[12]
For this night shalt thou dien for my sake." 560
I trow[13] that to a nourice[14] in this case
It had been hard this ruthé[15] for to see;
Well might a mother then have cried Alas!
But nathéless so sad steadfást was she,
That she enduréd all adversity, 565
And to the sergeant meekély she said,
"Have here again your little youngé maid.

[1] Hestes—commands. [2] Lust—desire. [3] Hent—took. [4] Desiously—unpityingly, cruelly. [5] Cheer—demeanour. [6] Diffame d reputation. [7] Ween'd—thought. [8] Tho—then. [9] Siked—d. [10] So as he was—as though he had been. [11] Barme—lap. [12] n betake—commend to him. [13] Trow—think. [14] Nourice—. [15] Ruthe—object of compassion.

"Go now (quod she) and do my lordés hest:[1]
And one thing would I pray you of your grace,
But if my lord forbade you at the least,[2] 570
Bury this little body in some place
That beastés ne no briddés it to-race."[3]
But he no word to that purpóse would say,
But took the child, and went upon his way.
This sergeant came unto his lord again, 575
And of Grisilda's wordés and her cheer
He told him point for point, in short and plain,
And him presented with his daughter dear.
Somewhat this lord hath ruth in his mannére,
But nathéless his purpose held he still, 580
As lordés do when they will have their will:
And bade this sergeant that he privily
Shouldé this child full softé wind and wrap,
With allé circumstances tenderly,
And carry it in a coffer' or in a lap; 585
But upon pain his head off for to swappe[4]
That no man shouldé know of his intent,
Ne whence he came ne whither that he went:
But at Bologn', unto his sister dear,
That thilké time of Pavie[5] was Countess, 590
He should it take and show her this mattére,
Beseeching her to do her business
This child to fost'ren in all gentleness;
And whose child that it was, he bade her hide
From every wight, for aught that may betide. 595
This sergeant go'th, and hath fullfill'd this thing.
But to this marquis now returné we;
For now go'th he full fast imagining
If by his wivés cheer he mighté see,
Or by her wordés apperceive, that she 600
Were changéd; but he never could her find
But ever[6] in one yliké sad[7] and kind.
As glad, as humble, as busy in servíce
And eke in love, as she was wont to be
Was she to him in every manner wise; 605

[1] Hest—command. [2] But if my lord, &c.—*i. e.* unless my lord have in the least degree forbade you. [3] Briddes it to-race—that no beasts or birds tear it. [4] Swappe—strike. [5] Pavie—Pavia. [6] Ever in one—unchangeably, continually. [7] Sad—steadfast.

V. 590. *of Pavie.*] When the text of this Tale was printed I had not sufficiently adverted to the reading of the best MSS. which is uniformly *Panik*. I have little doubt that it should be *Panik* both here and below, ver. 764, 924, as in Petrarch the Marquis's sister is said to be married to the Count de Panico. In Boccace it is *de Panago.*—*Tyr.*

Nor of her daughter not a word spake she:
No accident for no adversity
Was seen in her, ne never her daughter's name
Ne nevenéd[1] she for earnest or for game.

Pars Quarta.

In this estate there passéd been four year 610
Ere she with childé was, but as God wold,
A knavé[2] child she bare by this Walter
Full gracióus, and fair for to behold;
And when that folk it to his father told,
Not only he, but all his country merry 615
Was for this child, and God they thank and hery.[3]
When it was two years old, and from the breast
Departed of his nourice,[4] on a day
This marquis caughté yet another lest[5]
To tempt his wife yet ofter,[6] if he may.[7] 620
O! needless was she tempted in assay:[8]
But wedded men ne connen[9] no measúre
When that they find a patient creáture.
"Wife, quod this marquis, ye have heard ere this
My people sickly bearen our marriáge, 625
And namely since my son yboren[10] is,
Now is it worse than ever in all our age:
The murmur slay'th my heart and my courage,
For to mine earés cometh the voice so smart
That it well nigh destroyéd hath my heart. 630
"Now say they thus; 'When Walter is agone,
Then shall the blood of Janicle succeed,
And be our lord, for other have we none.'
Such wordés say my people, it is no drede:[11]
Well ought I of such murmur taken heed, 635
For certainly I dread all such sentence,
Though they not plainen[12] in my audience.
"I wouldé live in peace if that I might;
Wherefore I am disposéd utterly,
As I his sister servéd ere by night, 640
Right so think I to serve him privily.
This warn I you, that ye not suddenly
Out of yourself for no woe should outraie;[13]
Be'th patiént, and thereof I you pray."
"I have, quod she, said thus, and ever shall, 645
I will no thing, ne will no thing certáin

[1] Nevened — expressed. [2] Knave — male. [3] Hery — praise. [4] Nourice — nurse. [5] Lest — inclination. [6] Ofter — (qy.) again. [7] May — was able. [8] Assay — trial. [9] Connen — know. [10] Yboren — born. [11] It is no drede — there is no doubt of it. [12] Not plainen — do not complain. [13] Outraie — become outrageous.

But as you list: not grieveth me at all
Though that my daughter and my son be slain
At your commandément; that is to sain,
I have not had no part of children twain 650
But first sickness and after woe and pain.
"Ye be my lord, do'th with your owen thing
Right as you list; asketh no rede[1] of me;
For as I left at home all my clothing
When I came first to you, right so (quod she) 655
Left I my will and all my liberty,
And took your clothing; wherefore I you pray
Do'th your pleasánce, I will your lust[2] obey.
"And certés, if I haddé prescience
Your will to know ere ye your lust me told, 660
I would it do withouten negligence:
But now I wot your lust, and what ye wold,
All your pleasancé firm and stable' I hold;
For wist I that my death might do you ease,
Right gladly would I dien you to please. 665
"Death may not maken no comparison
Unto your love." And when this marquis say[3]
The constancy' of his wife, he cast adown
His eyen two, and wond'reth how she may[4]
In patiénce suffér all this array;[5] 670
And forth he go'th with dreary countenance,
But to his heart it was full great pleasánce.
This ugly sergeant in the samé wise
That he her daughter caughté, right so he
(Or worse, if men can any worse devise) 675
Hath hent[6] her son, that full was of beauty:
And ever in one[7] so patiént was she,
That she no cheeré made of heaviness,
But kist her son, and after 'gan it bless.
Save this she prayéd him, if that he might, 680
Her little son he would in earthé grave,
His tender limmés, delicate to sight,
From foulés and from beastés for to save.
But she none answer of him mighté have:
He went his way as he no thing ne raught,[8] 685
But to Bologn' he tenderly it brought.
This marquis wond'reth ever longer the more
Upon her patiénce; and if that he
Ne haddé sothly knowen therebefore
That perfectly her children lovéd she, 690
He would have ween'd[9] that of some subtlety

[1] Rede—advice. [2] Lust—wish, desire. [3] Say—saw. [4] May—is able. [5] Array—disposure. [6] Hent—seized. [7] Ever in one—unvaryingly. [8] Raught—cared. [9] Ween'd—imagined.

And of malíce, or for cruel courége,[1]
That she had suffered this with sad[2] visége.
But well he knew, that next himself, certáin
She lov'd her children best in every wise.[3] 695
But now of women would I asken fain[4]
If these assayés[5] mighten not suffice?
What could a sturdy husband more devise
To prove her wifehood and her steadfastness,
And he continuing ever in sturdiness? 700
But there be folk of such conditión,
That when they have a certain purpose take,
They cannot stint[6] of their intentión;
But right as they were bounden to a stake,
They will not of their firsté purpose slake: 705
Right so this marquis fully hath purposéd
To tempt his wife as he was first disposéd.
He waiteth if by word or countenance
That she to him was changéd of courége;[1]
But never could he finden variance; 710
She was aye one in heart and in visége;
And aye the farther that she was in age,
The moré true (if that it were possíble)
She was to him in love, and more penível.[7]
For which it seeméd thus, that of them two 715
There was but one will; for, as Walter lest,[8]
The samé lust was her pleasánce also;
And, God be thankéd, all fell for the best.
She shewéd well for no worldly unrest
A wife, as of herself, no thing ne should 720
Will in effect but as her husband would.
The slander' of Walter wonder widé spread,
That of a cruel heart he wickedly,
For[9] he a pooré woman wedded had,
Hath murd'red both his children privily: 725
Such murmur was among them commonly.
No wonder is, for to the people's ear
There came no word but that they murd'red were.
For which there as[10] his people therebefore
Had lov'd him well, the slander' of his diffame[11] 730
Made them that they him hateden therefore.
To be a murd'rer is a hateful name.
But nathéless for earnest nor for game

[1] Courage—spirit, mind. [2] Sad—composed. [3] Wise—manner. [4] Fain—gladly. [5] Assayes—trials. [6] Stint—cease. [7] Penible—painful, pains-taking. [8] Lest—wished. [9] For—because. [10] There as—whereas. [11] Diffame—bad reputation.

He of his cruel purpose n'oldé stent:[1]
To tempt his wife was set all his intent. 735
When that his daughter twelve years was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtle wise
Informéd of his will, sent his messáge,[2]
Commanding him such billés to devise
As to his cruel purpose may suffice, 740
How that the Pope, as for his people's rest,
Bade him to wed another if him lest.[3]
I say he bade they shoulden counterfeit
The Pope's bullés, making mentión
That he hath leave his firsté wife to lete,[4] 745
As by the Popés dispensatión
To stinten[5] rancour and dissentión
Betwixt his people and him. Thus spake the bull,
The which they have publíshed at the full.
The rudé people, as no wonder is, 750
Ween'den[6] full well that it had been right so;
But when these tidings came to Grisildis
I deemé that her heart was full of woe;
But she yliké sad[7] for evermo;
Disposéd was this humble creáture, 755
The adversity' of fortúne all to endure;
Abiding ever his lust and his pleasánce
To whom that she was given heart and all,
As to her very worldly suffisance.[8]
But shortly if this story tell I shall, 760
This marquis written hath in special
A letter, in which he showeth his intent,
And secretly he to Bológn' it sent
To th' Earl of Pavie, which that haddé tho[9]
Wedded his sister, pray'd he specially 765
To bringen home again his children two
In honourable estate all openly;
But one thing he him prayéd utterly,
That he to no wight, though men would enquere,
Shouldé not tell whose children that they were; 770
But say the maiden should ywedded be
Unto the Marquis of Salúce' anon.
And as this earl was prayéd, so did he;
For at day set he on his way is gone
Towárd Salúce', and lordés many one 775
In rich array, this maiden for to guide,
Her youngé brother riding her beside.

[1] N'olde stent—would not stop. [2] Message—messenger. [3] Lest—chose. [4] Lete—quit. [5] Stinten—stay. [6] Ween'den—believed. [7] Sad—steadfast. [8] Suffisance—sufficiency. [9] Tho—then.

Arrayéd was towárd her marriáge
This freshe maiden, full of gemmés clear;
Her brother, which that seven year was of age, 780
Arrayéd eke full fresh in his mannére :
And thus in great nobless, and with glad cheer,
Towárd Saluces shaping their journáy
From day to day they riden in their way.

Pars Quinta.

Among all this, after his wick'd uságe, 785
This marquis yet his wife to tempten more
To th' utterésté[1] proof of her courége,
Fully to have experience and lore[2]
If that she were as steadfast as before,
He on a day in open audience 790
Full boist'rously hath said her this sentence :
"Certés, Grisild', I had enough pleasánce
To have you to my wife for your goodness,
And for your truth and for your obeysánce;
Not for your lineage or for your richess; 795
But now know I in very sothfastness[3]
That in great lordship, if I me well avise,[4]
There is great servitude in sundry wise.[5]
"I may not do as every ploughman may :
My people me constraineth for to take 800
Another wife, and crien day by day;
And eke the Popé, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dare I undertake :
And truély thus much I will you say,
My newé wife is coming by the way. 805
"Be strong of heart, and void anon her place,
And thilké[6] dower that ye broughten me
Take it again ; I grant it of my grace.
Returneth to your father's house, (quod he)
No man may always have prosperity. 810
With even heart I rede[7] you to endure
The stroke of Fortune or of áventure."
And she again answér'd in patiénce ;
"My Lord, quod she, I wot and wist alway
How that betwixen your magnificence 815
And my povert' no wight ne can ne may
Maken comparison ; it is no nay :[8]
I ne' held me never digne[9] in no mannér
To be your wife nor yet your chamberer.

Uttereste—uttermost. [2] Lore—knowledge. [3] Sothfastness—th. [4] Well avise—observe accurately. [5] Sundry wise—various s. [6] Thilke—the same. [7] Rede—advise. [8] It is no nay—it is to be denied. [9] Digne—worthy.

"And in this house there[1] ye me lady made 820
(The highé God take I for my witness,
And all so wisely[2] he my soulé glad)
I never held me lady or mistress,
But humble servant to your worthiness,
And ever shall, while that my life may dure, 825
Aboven every worldly creáture.
"That ye so long of your benignity
Have holden me in honour and nobley,[3]
Whereas I was not worthy for to be,
That thank I God and you, to whom I pray 830
Foryield it you; there is no more to say.
Unto my father gladly will I wend,[4]
And with him dwell unto my livés end.
"There I was fost'red of a child full small;
Till I be dead my life there will I lead, 835
A widow clean in body, heart, and all:
For since I gave to you my 'womanhede,'[5]
And am your trué wife, it is no drede,[6]
God shieldé[7] such a lordés wife to take
Another man to husband or to make.[8] 840
"And of your newé wife God of his grace
So grant you wealé and prosperity,
For I will gladly yielden her my place,
In which that I was blissful wont to be:
For since it liketh you, my Lord, (quod she) 845
That whilom weren all my heartés rest,
That I shall go, I will go when you lest.[9]
"But there-as[10] ye me proffer such dowáire
As I first brought, it is well in my mind
It were my wretched clothés, nothing fair, 850
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goodé God! how gentle and how kind
Ye seeméd by your speech and your viság̃e
The day that makéd was our marriáge!
"But soth[11] is said, algate[12] I find it true, 855
For in effect it provéd is on me,
Love is not old, as when that it is new.
But certés, Lord, for no adversity
To dien in this case, it shall not be
That ever in word or work I shall repent 860
That I you gave my heart in whole intent.

[1] There—(for) where. [2] Wisely—surely. [3] Nobley—nobility. [4] Wend—depart. [5] Womanhede—womanhood, the virtue of a woman. [6] It is no drede—without doubt. [7] God shielde—God forbid. [8] Make—companion. [9] Lest—please. [10] There-as—where-as. [11] Soth—truly. [12] Algate—however.

"My Lord, ye wot that in my father's place
Ye did me strip out of my pooré weed,
And richély ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I naught elles out of drede[1] 865
But faith, and nakedness, and 'womanhede';[2]
And here again your clothing I restore,
And eke your wedding ring, for evermore.
"The remnant of your jewels ready be
Within your chamber', I dare it safely sain. 870
Naked out of my father's house (quod she)
I came, and naked I must turn again.
All your pleasancé would I follow fain;[3]
But yet I hope it be not your intent
That I smockléss out of your palace went. 875
"Ye could not do so dishonést[4] a thing,
That thilké[5] womb, in which your children lay,
Shouldé before the people' in my walking
Be seen all bare; wherefore, I you pray,
Let me not like a worm go by the way: 880
Remember you, mine owen Lord so dear,
I was your wife, though I unworthy were.
"Wherefore in guerdon of my 'womanhede,'
Which that I brought and 'yet' again I bear,
As vouchésafe to give me to my meed 885
But such a smock as I was wont to wear,
That I therewith may wrie[6] the womb of her
That was your wife. And here I take my leave
Of you, mine owen Lord, lest I you grieve."
"The smock, quod he, that thou hast on thy back
Let it be still, and bear it forth with thee." 891
But well unnethés[7] thilké word he spake,
But went his way for ruth and for pitý,
Before the folk herselven strippeth she,
And in her smock, with foot and head all bare, 895
Towárd her father's house forth is she fare.[8]
The folk her followen weeping in their way,
And Fortune aye they cursen as they gone;
But she from weeping kept her eyen dry,
Ne in this timé word ne spake she none. 900
Her father, that this tiding heard anon,
Curseth the day and timé that Natúre
Shope[9] him to be a living creáture.

[1] Out of drede—without doubt. [2] Womanhede—womanhood, the virtue of a woman. [3] Fain—cheerfully. [4] Dishonest, (Fr. *déshonnête*) — dishonourable. [5] Thilke—that very. [6] Wrie—wrap, cover. [7] Unnethes—scarcely. [8] Is she fare—is she fared, departed. [9] Shope—shaped, formed.

For out of doubt this oldé pooré man
Was ever' in súspect of her marriáge; 905
For ever' he deeméd, since it first began,
That when the lord fulfill'd had his courage[1]
Him wouldé think it were a disparáge
To his estate so low for to alight;
And voiden her as soon as ever he might.[2] 910
Again[3] his daughter hastily go'th he,
(For he by noise of folk knew her coming)
And with her oldé coat, as it might be,
He covereth her, full sorrowfully weeping;
But on her body might[2] he it not bring, 915
For rudé was the cloth, and more of age
By dayés fele[4] than at her marriáge.
Thus with her father for a certain space
Dwelleth this flower of wifely patiénce,
That neither by her wordés nor her face, 920
Before the folk, nor eke in their absence,
Ne showed she that her was done offence,
Nor of her high estate no rémembrance
Ne haddé she as by her countenance.
No wonder is, for in her great estate 925
Her ghost[5] was ever in plein[6] humility;
No tender mouth, no hearté delicate,
No pompé, no semblánt of royalty,
But full of patiént benignity,
Discreet, and pridéless, aye honourável, 930
And to her husband ever meek and stable.
Men speak of Job, and most for his humbless,
As clerkés, when them list, can well indite,
Namely of men, but as in sóthfastness,[7]
Though clérkes praisen women but a lite,[8] 935
There can no man in humbless him acquite
As woman can, ne can be half so true
As women be,—but it be fall of new.[9]

Pars Sexta.

From Bologn' is this Earl of Pavie come,
Of which the fame up sprang to more and less; 940
And to the peeple's earés all and some
Was couth[10] eke, that a newé marchioness
He with him brought in such pomp and richess,

[1] Courage—heart, inclination. [2] Might—was able. [3] Again—to meet. [4] Fele—many. [5] Ghost—spirit. [6] Plein—full. [7] Sothfastness—very truth. [8] Lite—little. [9] But it be fall of new—unless it have lately come to pass, (a playful little sarcasm.) [10] Couth—well-known.

That never was there seen with mannés eye
So noble' array in all West Lumbardy. 945
The marquis, which that shope[1] and knew all this,
Ere that this earl was come, sent his messáge[2]
For thilké pooré sely[3] Grísildis,
And she with humble heart and glad viság,
Not with no swollen thought in her couráge,[4] 950
Came at his hest,[5] and on her knees her set,
And reverently and wisely she him gret.[6]
"Grisild', (quod he) my will is utterly
This maiden that shall wedded be to me,
Receivéd be to-morrow as royally 955
As it possíbl' is in my house to be;
And eke that every wight in his degree
Have his estate in sitting and servíce,
And high pleasánce, as I can best devise.
"I have no woman suffisant, certáin, 960
The chambers for t'array in ordinance
After my lust,[7] and therefore would I fain[8]
That thine were all such manner governance;
Thou knowest eke of old all my pleasánce:
Though thine array be bad, and evil besey,[9] 965
Do thou thy devoir at the lesté way."[10]
"Not only, Lord, that I am glad (quod she)
To do your lust, but I desire also
You for to serve and please in my degree,
Withouten fainting, and shall evermo: 970
Ne never for no weal ne for no woe
Ne shall the ghost within my hearté stent[11]
To love you best with all my true intent."
And with that word she 'gan the house to dight,[12]
And tables for to set, and beddés make, 975
And painéd[13] her to do all that she might,[14]
Praying the chamberers for Goddés sake
To hasten them, and fasté sweep and shake;
And she, the mosté serviceabl' of all,
Hath every chamber' arrayéd and his hall. 980
Abouten undern[15] 'gan this earl alight
That with him brought these noble children tway,
For which the people ran to see the sight
Of their array, so richély besey;[9]
And then at erst[17] amongés them they say 985

[1] Shope—shaped, contrived. [2] Message—messenger. [3] Sely—innocent, simple. [4] Courage—spirit. [5] Hest—command. [6] Gret—greeted. [7] Lust—pleasure. [8] Fain—gladly. [9] Besey—beseen. [10] At the leste way—in the quickest manner. [11] Stent—cease. [12] Dight—dress, arrange. [13] Pained—laboured. [14] Might—could. [15] Undern—first quarter of the day, nine o'clock. [16] At erst—at first.

That Walter was no fool, though that him lest
To change his wife, for it was for the best.
For she is fairer, as they deemen all,
Than is Grisild', and moré tender' of age, 990
And fairer fruit between them shouldé fall,
And more pleasánt, for[1] her high lineage:
Her brother eke so fair was of viságe
That them to see the people hath caught pleasánce,
Commending now the marquis' governance.
"O stormy people' unsad[2] and ever' untrue, 995
And undiscreet and changing as a fane,[3]
Delighting ever in rombel[4] that is new,
For like the mooné waxen ye and wane:
Aye full of clapping,[5] dear enough a jane,[6]
Your doom[7] is false, your constance' evil preveth,[8]
A full great fool is he that on you 'lieveth!"[9] 1001
Thus saiden saddé[10] folk in that city,
When that the people gazéd up and down;
For they were glad right for the novelty 1005
To have a newé lady of their town.
No more of this make I now mentión,
But to Grisild' again I will me dress,
And tell her constancy' and her business.
Full busy was Grisild' in every thing 1010
That to the feasté was appertinent;
Right naught was she abaist[11] of her clothing,
Though it were rude, and somedeal eke to-rent,
But with glad cheeré to the gate is went,
With other folk, to greet the marchioness, 1015
And after that doth forth her business.
With so glad cheer his guestés she receiveth,
And conningly[12] evereach in his degree,
That no defaulté no man apperceiveth, 1020
But aye they wond'ren what she mighté be
That in so poor array was for to see,
And couldé such honóur and reverence,
And worthily they praisen her prudence.
In all this meané whilé she ne stent[13] 10
This maid and eke her brother to commend
With all her heart in full benign intent,
So well that no man could her praise amend;
But at the last when that these lordés wend[14]

[1] For—because of. [2] Unsad—wavering, unsteady. [3] F
weathercock. [4] Rombel—rumour. [5] Clapping—loud gal
[6] Jane, (*janua*)—a small Genoese coin. [7] Doom—jud
[8] Preveth—proveth. [9] 'lieveth—believeth. [10] Sadde—
steady. [11] Abaist—abashed, ashamed. [12] Conningly—
[13] Stent—ceased. [14] Wend—go.

To sitten down to meat, he 'gan to call
Grisild', as she was busy in the hall.
"Grisild' (quod he, as it were in his play) 1030
How liketh thee my wife and her beauty?"
"Right well, my Lord, (quod she) for in good fay,[1]
A fairer saw I never none than she;
I pray to God give you prosperity,
And so I hope that he will to you send 1035
Pleasánce enough unto your livés end.
"One thing beseech I you, and warn also,
That ye ne prické[2] with no tórmenting
This tender maiden as ye have done mo,[3]
For she is foster'd in her nourishing 1040
More tenderly, and to my supposing
She mighté not adversity endure
As could a pooré foster'd creáture."
And when this Walter saw her patiénce,
Her gladdé cheer, and no malíce at all, 1045
And he so often had her done offence,
And she aye sad[4] and constant as a wall,
Continuing aye her innocence o'er all,
This sturdy marquis 'gan his hearté dress[5]
To rue upon her wifely steadfastness. 1050
"This is enough, Grisilda mine, (quod he)
Be now no more aghast or evil apaid,[6]
I have thy faith and thy benignity,
As well as ever woman was, assay'd
In great estate and poorély arrayed: 1055
Now know I, dearé wife, thy steadfastness;"
And her in armés took, and 'gan to kiss.

[1] Fay—faith. [2] Pricke—wound. [3] Mo—me: one of Chaucer's old corruptions of orthography for the purpose of accommodating is rhyme. Mr. Tyrwhitt remarks that the poet possessed ample recedent for this licence in the old poets of other countries, and articularly in Dante, the most unscrupulous of them all. "It hould seem (he says) that while orthography was so variable as was in all the living European languages before the invention f printing, the poets thought it generally advisable to sacrifice ropriety of spelling to exactness of rhyming: of the former fence there were but few judges, the latter was obvious to the eye f every reader." [4] Sad—firm. [5] Dress—prepare. [6] Or evil apaid -be no longer terrified or ill rewarded.

V. 1047. *Continuing aye.*] In the original, this line was thus ritten;—

"Continuing ever hire innocence over all;"

nd as in such state it stood in total defiance of all metre, I have entured to alter it as above. The reader need not be reminded hat Chaucer was not always scrupulous in abbreviating syllables or the accommodation of his verses, whatever licence he may have iven himself in orthography for the convenience of his rhymes.

And she for wonder took of it no keep; [1]
She heardé not what thing he to her said;
She far'd as she had start out of a sleep, 1060
Till she out of her masedness abraid.[2]
"Grisild' (quod he) by God that for us dey'd,
Thou art my wife; none other I ne have,
Ne never had, as God my soulé save.
"This is thy daughter which thou hast supposéd
To be my wife; that other faithfully 1066
Shall be mine heir, as I have aye disposéd;
Thou bare them of thy body truély;
At Bologn' have I kept them privily:
Take them again, for now may'st thou not say 1070
That thou hast lorn [3] none of thy children tway.
"And folk that otherwise have said of me,
I warn them well that I have done this deed
For no malíce nor for no cruelty,
But for t' assay in thee thy womanhede,[4] 1075
And not to slay my children (God forbid)
But for to keep them privily and still
Till I thy purpose knew and all thy will."
When she this heard aswooné down she falleth
For piteous joy; and after her swooning 1080
She both her youngé children to her calleth,
And in her armés, piteously weeping,
Embraceth them, and tenderly kissing
Full like a mother, with her salté tears
She bathéd both their visage and their hairs. 1085
O, which [5] a piteous thing it was to see
Her swooning, and her humble voice to hear!
"*Grand mercy!* Lord, God thank it you (quod she)
That ye have savéd me my children dear:
Now reck [6] I never to be dead right here, 1090
Since I stand in your love and in your grace,
No force of death,[7] nor when my spirit pace.[8]
"O tender, O dear, O youngé children mine!
Your woful mother weenéd steadfastly [9]
That cruel houndés or some foul vermín 1095
Had eaten you; but God of his mercy
And your benigné father tenderly
Hath done you [10] keep:" and in that samé stound [11]
All suddenly she swapp'd [12] adown to ground.

[1] Took no keep—paid no regard. [2] Abraid—awoke. [3] Lorn—lost. [4] Womanhede—womanly virtue. [5] Which a piteous, &c.—what a piteous: a common provincialism to this day. [6] Reck—care. [7] No force of death—no matter for death. [8] Pace—fleets. [9] Weened steadfastly—firmly believed. [10] Done you keep—caused you to be preserved. [11] Stound—instant. [12] Swapped—fell.

And in her swoon so sadly[1] holdeth she 1100
Her children two, when she 'gan them embrace,
That with great sleight[2] and great difficulty
The children from her arm they 'gan arrace:[3]
O! many a tear on many a piteous face
Down ran of them that stooden her beside; 1105
Unnethe[4] abouten her might they abide.
Walter her gladdeth, and her sorrow slaketh;
She riseth up abashéd from her trance,
And every wight her joy and feasté maketh
Till she hath caught again her countenance. 1110
Walter her doth so faithfully pleasánce,
That it was dainty for to see the cheer
Betwixt them two since they been met in fere.[5]
These ladies, when that they their timé sey,[6]
Have taken her, and into chamber gone, 1115
And strippen her out of her rude array,
And in a cloth of gold that brighté shone,
With a coroune of many a riché stone
Upon her head, they into hall her brought,
And there she was honóuréd as her ought. 1120
Thus hath this piteous day a blissful end;
For every man and woman doth his might,
This day in mirth and revel to dispend,
Till on the welkin shone the starrés bright;
For more solemné in every manné's sight 1125
This feasté was, and greater of costage,
Than was the revel of her marriáge.
Full many a year in high prosperity
Liven these two in concord and in rest,
And richély his daughter married he 1130
Unto a lord, one of the worthiest
Of all Itaille, and then in peace and rest
His wivés father in his court he keepeth,
Till that the soul out of his body creepeth.
His son succeedeth in his heritage, 1135
In rest and peace, after his father's day,
And fortunate was eke in marriáge,
Al[7] put he not his wife in great assay:[8]
This world is not so strong, it is no nay,[9]
As it hath been in oldé timés yore, 1140
And heark'neth what this author saith therefóre.
This story is said, not for that wivés should
Follow Grisild' as in humility,

Sadly—firmly. [2] Sleight—art. [3] Arrace, (Fr. *arracher*)—[illegible]. [4] **Unnethe**—scarcely. [5] **Fere**—company. [6] Sey—saw. [illegible]—**although**. [8] Assay—trial. [9] It is no nay—it is not to be denied.

For it were importáble though they would,
But for that every wight in his degree 1145
Shouldé be constant in adversity
As was Grisilda, therefore Petrarc writeth
This story, which with high style he' inditeth.
For since a woman was so patiént
Unto a mortal man, well more we ought 1150
Receiven all in gree[1] that God us sent.
For great skill is he provéd that he wrought;[2]
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As saith Saint James, if ye his 'pistle read;
He proveth folk all day, it is no drede;[3] 1155
And suff'reth us, as for our exercise,
With sharpé scourges of adversity
Full often to be beat in sundry wise,
Not for to know our will, for certés he
Ere we were born knew all our frailéty, 1160
And for our best is all his governance;
Let us then live in virtuous sufferance.
But one word, Lordings, heark'neth ere I go:
It were full hard to finden now adays
In all a town Grisildas three or two; 1165
For if that they were put to such assays,[4]
The gold of them hath now so bad allays[5]
With brass, that though the coin be fair at eye,
It wouldé rather brast atwo than plie.[6]
For which here, for the Wifés love of Bath 1170
Whose life, and all her secté God maintain
In high mastrý, and ellés were it scath,[7]
I will with lusty hearté fresh and green,
Say you a song to gladden you I ween,
And let us stint of earnestful mattére. 1175
Heark'neth my song, that saith in this mannére:
Grisild' is dead, and eke her patiénce,
And both at onés buried in Itaille,
For which I cry in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be t' assail 1180
His wifés patiénce, in trust to find
Grisilda's, for in certain he shall fail.
O noble wivés! full of high prudence,
Let no humility your tongués nail,
Ne let no clerk have cause or diligence 1185
To write of you a story' of such marváille

[1] In gree—kindness: (Fr. *de bon gré*)—in good will. [2] For great skill, &c.—*i. e.* "he who does so, is proved to possess great skill." [3] It is no drede—without doubt. [4] Assays—trials. [5] Allays—alloys. [6] Plie (Fr.)—bend. [7] Scath—damage.

As of Grisilda, patiént and kind,
Lest Chichévache you swallow' in her entraille.
  Followeth Echo, that holdeth no silence,
But ever answereth at the countertaille :[1] 1190
Be not bedaffed[2] for your innocence,
But sharply take on you the governaille :[3]
Imprinteth well this lesson in your mind
For common profit, since it may avail.
  Ye archéwives ![4] stand'th aye at defence, 1195
Since ye be strong as is a great cammail,
Ne suff'reth not that men do you offence.
And slender wivés, feeble' as in bataille,
Be'th eager' as is a tiger yond' in Inde ;
Aye clappeth as a mill I you counsail. 1200
  Ne dread them not, do them no reverence,
For though thine husband arméd be in mail,
The arrows of thy crabbed eloquence
Shall pierce his breast and eke his aventail :[5]
In jealousy I rede[6] eke thou him bind, 1205
And thou shalt make him couch as doth a quail.
  If thou be fair, there[7] folk be in presénce,
Show thou thy visage and thine áparail ;
If thou be foul, be free of thy dispense ;
To get thee friendés aye do thy travail :
Be aye of cheer as light as leaf on lind,[8]
And let him care, and weep, and wring, and wail. 1212

[1] Countertaille — countertally, one tally answering exactly to another. [2] Bedaffed—befooled. [3] Governaille — helm. [4] Archewives — grandwives. [5] Aventail — armour. *See note.* [6] Rede—recommend. [7] There—(for) where. [8] Lind—linden, or lime tree.

V. 1188. *Lest Chichevache.*] The allusion is to the subject of an old ballad, which is still preserved in MS. *Harl.* 2251, fol. 270, b. It is a kind of pageant, in which two beasts are introduced called *Bycorne* and *Chichevache.* The first is supposed to feed upon obedient husbands, and the other upon patient wives ; and the humour of the piece consists in representing Bycorne as pampered with a superfluity of food, and Chichevache as half starved.—In Stowe's Catalogue of Lydgate's works, at the end of Speght's edit. of Chaucer, there is one entitled "Of two monstrous beasts, *Bycorne* and *Chichefache.*" It is not improbable that Lydgate translated the ballad now extant from some older French poem to which Chaucer alludes. The name of *Chichevache* is French, *vacca parca —lean cow.—Tyr.*

V. 1204. *aventail.*] The forepart of the armour, *Sk.* He deduces it from *avant.* But *ventaillie* was the common name for that aperture in a close helmet through which the wearer was to breathe, [*Nicot.* in v.] so that perhaps *aventaille* meant originally a helmet with such an aperture ; *un heaume à ventaille.—Tyr.*

THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE.

"By Goddés mercy, said our Hosté tho.[1]
Now such a wife * I pray God keep me fro.
Lo, suché sleightés[2] and subtilities
In women been; for aye as busy as bees
Be they, us sely[3] men for to deceive, 5
And from a sothé[4] will they ever waive:[5]
By this Merchantés Tale it proveth well.
But nathéless, as true as any steel
I have a wife, though that she pooré be,
But of her tongue a labbing[6] shrew is she; 10
And yet she hath a heap of vices mo.
Thereof no force;[7] let all such thingés go.
But weet[8] ye what? in counsel be it said,
Me rueth sore I am unto her tied;
For, and I shouldé reckon every vice 15
Which that she hath, ywis[9] I were too nice;[10]
And causé why, it should reported be
And told to her of some of this company,
(Of[11] whom it needeth not for to declare,
Since women connen utter[12] such chaffare) 20
And eke my wit sufficeth not thereto
To tellen all; wherefore my Tale is do.
"Squiér, come near, if it your willé be,
And say somewhat of love, for certés ye
Connen[13] thereon as much as any man." 25
"Nay, Sir, quod he, but such thing as I can,
With heartly will, for I will not rebel
Against your lust,[14] a Talé will I tell.
Have me excuséd if I speak amiss:
My will is good; and lo, my Tale is this." 30

[1] Tho—then. [2] Sleightes—tricks. [3] Sely—silly, simple. [4] Sothe—truth. [5] Waive—swerve. [6] Labbing—blabbing. [7] No force—no matter. [8] Weet—know. [9] Ywis—certainly. [10] Nice—foolish. [11] Of—is here used for "by." [12] Connen utter—(for utterly) *i. e.* perfectly understood such "chaffare"—dealing. I have, I confess, made a desperate rush for the above interpretation. Mr. Tyrwhitt has given up the attempt. It is not improbable that *utter* may signify *to put forth*: the line would then read thus:—

"Since women know how to deal in such ware."

[13] Connen—know. [14] Lust—wish.

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* He alluded to the wife of Old January, in the *Merchant's Tale.*

"Amidst a tree for-dry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in her walk,
There sat a falcon o'er her head full high."—l. 432.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

At Sarra, in the land of Tartary,
There dwelt a king that warriéd Russie,
Through which there diéd many a doughty man.
This noble king was clepéd Cámbuscan.
Which in his time was of so great renown 35
That there n'as [1] no where in no región
So excellent a lord in allé thing;
Him lackéd naught that 'longeth to a king,
As of the sect of which that he was born.
He kept his lay [2] to which he was ysworn, 40
And thereto he was hardy, wise, and rich,
And piteous and just, and always yliche,[3]
True of his word, benign and honouráble,
Of his couráge as any centre stable,

[1] N'as—was not. [2] Lay—law. [3] Yliche—alike, equal.

The Squire's Tale.] The King of Araby sendeth to Cambuscan King of Sarra a horse and a sword of rare quality, and to his daughter Canace a glass and a ring, by the virtue whereof she understandeth the language of all fowls. Much of this Tale is either lost or else never finished by Chaucer.—*Urry.*

Young, fresh, and strong, in arms desirous,[1] 45
As any bachelor of all his house.
A faire persón he was and fortunate,
And kept alway so well reál[2] estate
That there n'as[3] no where such another man.
This noble king, this Tartar Cambuscan, 50
Had two sonnés by Elfeta his wife,
Of which the eldest son hight Algarsife,
That other was yclepéd Camballo.
A daughter had this worthy king also,
That youngest was, and highté Canacé: 55
But for to tellen you all her beauty
It li'th not in my tongue ne in my conning;[4]
I dare not undertake so high a thing:
Mine English eke is insufficiént;
It musté be a rethor[5] excellent, 60
That could[6] his colours 'longing for that art,
If he should her descriven any part:
I am none such; I must speak as I can.
And so befell that when this Cambuscan
Hath twenty winter borne his diadem, 65
As he was wont from year to year I deem,
He let the feast of his nativity
Done crién[7] throughout Sarrá his city,
The last idus of March aftér the year.
Phœbus the sun full jollif was and clear, 70
For he was nigh his exaltatión
In Martés face, and in his mansión
In Ariés, the choleric hot sign:
Full lusty[8] was the weather and benign,
For which the fowls against the sunné sheen,[9] 75
(What for the season and the youngé green)
Full loudé sungen their affectións:
Them seeméd had getten them protectións[10]
Against the sword of winter keen and cold.
This Cámbuscan, of which I have you told, 80
In royal vestiments, sat on his dais[11]
With diadem, full high in his paláce,
And holt[12] his feast so solemn and so rich,
That in this world ne was there non it liche,[13]
Of which if I shall tellen all th' array, 85
Then would it occupy a summer's day;

[1] Desirous—eager. [2] Real—royal. [3] N'as—was not. [4] Conning—skill. [5] Rethor—rhetorician. [6] Could—knew. [7] Done crien—he ordered the feast of his nativity to be cried throughout his city. [8] Lusty—agreeable. [9] Sheen—shining. [10] Them seemed, &c.—*i.e.* "they seemed to have got protection." [11] Dais—the raised floor in a banquetting hall. [12] Holt—held. [13] Liche—like.

And eke it needeth not for to devise
At every course the order' of their servíce :
I will not tellen of their strangé sewes,[1]
Nor of their swannés nor their herónsewes : 90
Eke in that land, as tellen knightés old,
There is some meat that is full dainty hold,
That in this land men reck[2] of it full small :
There n'is no man that may reporten all.
I will not tarrien you, for it is prime, 95
And, for it is no fruit, but loss of time :
Unto my purpose I will have recourse.
And so befell that after the thriddé[3] course,
While that this king sat thus in his nobley,[4]
Heark'ning his ministrels their thingés play, 100
Before him at his board deliciously ;
In at the hallé door all suddenly
There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
And in his hand a broad mirrór of glass ;
Upon his thumb he had of gold a ring, 105
And by his side a naked sword hanging ;
And up he rideth to the highé board.
In all the hall ne was there spoke a word
For marvel of this knight ; him to behold
Full busily they waiten young and old. 110
This strangé knight that came thus suddenly,
All arméd save his head full richély,
Salúeth king and queen, and lordés all,
By order as they satten in the hall,
With so high reverence and óbservance 115
As well in speech as in his countenance,
That Gawain with his oldé courtesy,
Though he were come again out of Faerie,
Ne could him not amenden with a word :
And after this before the highé board 120
He with a manly voice said his messáge,
After the form uséd in his languáge,
Withouten vice of syllable' or of letter :
And for[5] his talé shouldé seem the better,
Accordant to his wordés was his cheer,[6] 125
As teacheth art of speech them that it lere.[7]
Al-be-it that I cannot sound his style,
Nor cannot climben o'er so high a stile,

[1] Sewes and heronsewes. *Sewes*—dishes; *Sewer*, the officer appointed to place them on table. *Heronsewes*—young herons. [2] Reck—care. [3] Thridde—third. [4] Nobley—nobility. [5] For his tale—because, or, in order that his tale, &c. [6] Cheer—deportment. [7] Lere—learn.

Yet say I this, as to commúne intent,
Thus much amounteth all that ever' he meant, 130
If it so be that I have it in mind.
He said; "The King of Araby' and of Inde,
My liegé Lord, on this solemné day,
Salúeth you as he best can and may,
And sendeth you, in honour of your feast, 135
By me, that am all ready at your hest,[1]
This steed of brass, that easily and well
Can in the space of a day naturel
(This is to say, in four-and-twenty hours)
Where so you list, in drought or ellés show'rs, 140
Bearen your body into every place
To which your hearté willeth for to pace,[2]
Withouten wemme[3] of you through foul or fair;
Or if you list to flee as high in th' air
As doth an eagle, when him list to soar, 145
This samé steed shall bear you evermore,
Withouten harm, till ye be there you lest,
(Though that ye sleepen on his back or rest)
And turn again with writhing[4] of a pin;
He that it wrought he couldé many a gin;[5] 150
He waited many a constellatión
Ere he had done this operatión,
And knew full many a seal and many a bond.
"This mirror eke that I have in mine hond
Hath such a might that men may in it see 155
When there shall fall any adversity
Unto your regne or to yourself also,
And openly who is your friend or foe;
And o'er all this, if any lady bright
Hath set her heart on any manner wight,[6] 160
If he be false she shall his treason see,
His newé love, and all his subtlety,
So openly that there shall nothing hide.
"Wherefore against this lusty summer tide,
This mirror and this ring, that ye may see, 165
He hath sent to my Lady Canace,
Your excellenté daughter that is here.
"The virtue of this ring, if ye will hear,
Is this, that if her list it for to wear
Upon her thumb, or in her purse it bear, 170
There is no fowl that fleeth under heaven
That she ne shall well understand his steven,[7]

[1] Hest—command. [2] Pace — pass, go. [3] Wemme — fault. [4] Writhing—turning. [5] Coulde many a gin — was competent to many a contrivance. [6] Manner wight — description of person. [7] Steven—speech.

And know his meaning openly and plain,
And answer him in his languáge again;
And every grass that groweth upon root 175
She shall eke know, and whom it will do boot,[1]
All be his woundés ne'er so deep and wide.
"This naked sword, that hangeth by my side,
Such virtue hath, that what man that it smite,
Throughout his armour it will carve and bite, 180
Were it as thick as is a branchéd oak;
And what man that is wounded with the stroke
Shall ne'er be whole, till that you list of grace
To stroke him with the plat[2] in thilké place
There[3] he is hurt; this is as much to sain, 185
Ye moten[4] with the platté sword again
Stroken him in the wound and it will close.
This is the very soth,[5] withouten glose:[6]
It faileth not while it is in your hold."
And when this knight hath thus his talé told 190
He rideth out of hall, and down he light.
His steedé, which that shone as sunné bright,
Stant in the court as still as any stone.
This knight is to his chamber led anon,
And is unarm'd, and to the meat yset. 195
These presents been full richély yfet,[7]
This is to say, the sword and the mirrór,
And borne anon into the highé tow'r
With certain officers ordain'd therefore;
And unto Canace the ring is bore 200
Solemnély, there[3] she sat at the table.
But sikerly,[8] withouten any fable,
The horse of brass, that may not be remuéd,[9]
It stant as it were to the ground ygluéd:
There may no man out of the place it drive 205
For none engíne of windlass or polive:[10]
And causé why, for they con[11] not the craft,
And therefore in the place they have it laft
Till that the knight hath taught them the mannere
To voiden[12] him, as ye shall after hear. 210
Great was the press[13] that swarméd to and fro
To garen[14] on this horse that standeth so;
For it so high was, and so broad and long,
So well proportionéd for to be strong,

[1] Boot—remedy, help. [2] Plat—Fr. flat part. [3] There—where. [4] Moten—must. [5] Soth—truth. [6] Glose—deceit. [7] Yfet—brought, fetched. [8] Sikerly—surely. [9] Remued—(Fr. *remué*) removed. [10] Polive—pulley. [11] For they con not—because they do not know. [12] Voiden—remove. [13] Press—crowd. [14] Garen—gaze.

Right as it were a steed of Lumbardy, 215
Therewith so horsely and so quick of eye
As it a gentle Poileis courser were ;
For certés from his tail unto his ear
Nature nor art ne could him not amend 220
In no degree, as all the people ween'd.
But evermore their mosté wonder was
How that it couldé go and was of brass :
It was of Faerie, as the people seeméd :
Diversé folk diversély had deeméd: 225
As many heads as many wittés been.
They murmuréd as doth a swarm of been,
And maden skilles[1] after their fantasies,
Rehearsing of the oldé poetries,
And said it was ylike the Pegasee, 230
The horse that haddé wingés for to flee,
Or else it was the Greekés' horse Sinon,
That broughté Troyé to destructión,
As men may in these oldé gestés[2] read.
"My heart (quod one) is evermore in drede;[3] 235
I trow some men of armés be therein,
That shapen them this city for to win :
It were right good that all such thing were know."
Another rownéd[4] to his fellow low,
And said, "He lieth, for it is rather like 240
An ápparence ymade by some magíc,
As jugglers playén at these feastés great."
Of sundry doubtés thus they jangl' and treat,[5]
As lewéd[6] people deemen commonly
Of thingés that been made more subtlely 245
Than they can in their lew'dness comprehend:
They deemen gladly to the badder end.
And some of them wond'red on the mirrór
That borne was up into the master tow'r,[7]
How men might in it suché thingés see. 250
Another answér'd and said; "It might well be
Naturally by compositións
Of angles and of sly reflectións ;"

[1] Skilles — reasons. [2] Gestes — adventures. [3] Drede — dread. [4] Rowned — whispered. [5] Treat — discuss. [6] Lewed — ignorant. [7] Master tow'r—chief tower.

V. 218. *a gentle Poileis courser.*] A horse of Apulia, which in old French was usually called *Poille.* The horses of that country were much esteemed.—*Tyr.*

V. 232. *the Greekes' horse Sinon.*] This is rather an awkward expression for—*the horse of Sinon the Greek,* or, as we might say, *Sinon the Greek's horse.*—*Tyr.*

And saidé that in Rome was suché one.
They speak of Alhazen and Vitellon 255
And Aristotle, that writen in their lives
Of quainté[1] mirrors and of próspectives,
As knowen they that have their bookés heard.
And other folk have wond'red on the sword
That wouldé piercen throughout every thing; 260
And fell in speech of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles for his quainté[1] spear,
For he could with it bothé heal and dere,[2]
Right in such wise as men may with the sword
Of which right now ye have yourselven heard. 265
They speaken of sundry harding of metál,
And speaken of medicínés therewithall,
And how and when it should yharden'd be,
Which is unknown algatés[3] unto me.
Then speaken they of Canaceés ring, 270
And saiden all, that such a wonder thing
Of crafte of ringés heard they never none,
Save that he, Moses and King Solomon,
Hadden a name of conning[4] in such art.
Thus say the people, and drawen them apart. 275
But nathéless some saiden that it was
Wonder to maken of fern ashen glass,
And yet is glass naught like ashen of fern;
But for they had yknowen it so ferne,[5]
Therefore ceaseth their jangling and their wonder.
As soré wond'ren some on cause of thunder, 281
On ebbe and flood, on gossamer and on mist,
And on all thing till that the cause is wist.[6]
Thus janglen they, and deemen and devise,
Till that the king 'gan from his board arise. 285
Phœbus hath left the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beast reál,[7]
The gentle Lion, with his Aldrian,
When that this Tartar king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from his board, there as he sat full high: 290
Before him go'th the loudé minstrelcy,
Till he come to his chamber of paréments,[8]
Thereas they sounden divers instruments,

[1] Quainte—curious. [2] Dere—wound, hurt. [3] Algates—however. Conning—skill. [5] So ferne—so before. [6] Wist—known. [7] Real -royal. [8] Parements—ornaments.

V. 255. *Alhazen and Vitellon.*] *Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticæ* re extant, printed at Basil, 1572. The first is supposed by his litor to have lived about A. D. 1100, and the second to A. D. 70.—*Tyr.*

That it is like a heaven for to hear.
  Now dancen lusty Venus' children dear, 295
For in the Fish her lady sat full high,
And looketh on them with a friendly eye.
  This noble king is set upon his throne,
This strangé knight is fet[1] to him full soon,
And on the dance he go'th with Canace. 300
  Here is the revel and the jollity
That is not able a dull man to devise :[2]
He must have knowen Love and his servíce,
And been a feastly man, as fresh as May,
That shouldé you devisen such array. 305
  Who could tellen you the form of dances
So úncouth,[3] and so freshé countenances,
Such subtle lookings and dissimulings,
For dread of jealous men's appérceivings ?
No man but Launcelot, and he is dead ; 310
Therefóre I pass o'er all this lustyhead ;[4]
I say no more, but in this jollyness
I let them, till men to the supper 'em dress.[5]
  The steward bit the spices for to hie,[6]
And eke the wine, in all this melody ; 315
The ushers and the squiéry been[7] gone,
The spices and the wine is come anon :
They eat and drink, and when this had an end
Unto the temple', as reason was, they wend :[8]
The service done they suppen all by day. 320
  What needeth you rehearsen their array ?
Each man wot well that at a kingés feast
Is plenty to the most and to the least,
And dainties more than be in my knowing.
  And after supper go'th this noble king 325
To see this horse of brass, with all a rout
Of lordés and of ladies him about.
Such wond'ring was there on this horse of brass,
That since the great assiege of Troyé was,
Thereas[9] men wond'red on a horse also, 330
Ne was there such a wond'ring as was tho.[10]
But, finally, the king asketh the knight
The virtue of this courser and the might,
And prayéd him to tell his governance.[11]
  This horse anon 'gan for to trip and dance, 335

[1] Fet — fetched, brought. [2] Devise — describe. [3] Uncouth — strange, uncommon. [4] Lustyhead — delight. [5] Dress — repair. [6] Bit, &c.—*i. e.* the steward bade, or, ordered the spices to speed, or circulate. [7] Been — *i. e.* having been. [8] Wend — proceed. [9] Thereas—whereas. [10] Tho—then. [11] His governance—mode of governing him.

When that the knight laid hand upon his rein,
And saidé; "Sire, there is no more to sain,
But when you list to riden any where,
Ye moten trill a pin stant [1] in his ear,
Which I shall tellen you betwixt us two, 340
Ye moten nempn' [2] him to what place also,
Or to what country, that you list to ride.
And when ye come thereas [3] you list abide
Bid him descend, and trill another pin,
(For therein li'th th' effect of all the gin) [4] 345
And he will down descend and do your will,
And in that place he will abiden still;
Though all the world had the contrary swore
He shall not thence be drawen nor be bore: [5]
Or if you list to bid him thennés gone, 350
Trillé this pin, and he will van'sh anon
Out of the sight of every manner wight,[6]
And come again, be it by day or night,
When that you list to clepen [7] him again,
In such a guise as I shall to you sain 355
Betwixen you and me, and that full soon.
Ride when you list, there n'is no more to done.
Enforméd when the king was of the knight,
And hath conceivéd in his wit aright
The manner and the form of all this thing, 360
Full glad and blith this noble doughty king
Repaireth to his revel as beforn.
The bridle is into the tow'r yborne,
And kept among his jewels lefe [8] and dear:
The horse vanish'd, I n'ot [9] in what mannere, 365
Out of their sight; ye get no more of me:
But thus I let [10] in lust and jollity
This Cambuscan his lordés feastying
Till that well nigh the day began to spring.

Pars Secunda.

The nourice [11] of degestion, the sleep, 370
'Gan on them wink, and bade them taken keep [12]
That muchel drink and labour will have rest,
And with a gaping mouth them all he kest,[13]
And said, that it was time to lie adown,
For blood was in his dominatión: 375

[1] Stant—(for) which stands, or is standing. [2] Moten nempn'—must name. [3] Thereas—whereas. [4] Gin—engine, contrivance. [5] Bore—borne. [6] Manner wight—every description of person. [7] Clepen—call. [8] Lefe—pleasing. [9] N'ot—know not. [10] Let—leave. [11] Nourice—nurse. [12] Take keep—observe. [13] Kest—kissed.

Cherisheth blood, natúrés friend, quod he.
They thanken him gaping, by two, by three;
And every wight 'gan draw him to his rest,
As sleep them bade; they took it for the best.
Their dreamés shall not now be told for me; 380
Full were their headés of fumosity,[1]
That causeth dream, of which there is no charge:[2]
They sleepen till that it was primé large,[3]
The mosté part, but it were[4] Canace;
She was full measurable,[5] as women be; 385
For of her father had she tak'n her leave
To go to rest soon after it was eve;
Her listé not appalléd[6] for to be,
Nor on the morrow unfeastly for to see,[7]
And slept her firsté sleep, and then awoke: 390
For such a joy she in her hearté took
Both of her quainté[8] ring and her mirrór,
That twenty time she changéd her colóur.
And in her sleep right for the impressión
Of her mirrór she had a visión; 395
Wherefore ere that the sunné 'gan up glide,
She clepeth upon her mistress her beside,
And saidé that her lusté[9] for t' arise.
These oldé women that be gladly wise,
As is her mistress, answer'd her anon, 400
And said; "Madamé, whither will ye gone
Thus early? for the folk be all in rest."
"I will, quod she, arisen, for me lest
No longer for to sleep, and walk about."
Her mistress clepeth women a great rout, 405
And up they risen well a ten or twelve;
Up riseth freshé Canace herselve,
As ruddy and bright as is the youngé sun
That in the Ram is four degrees yrun;
No higher was he when she ready was; 410
And forth she walkéth easily a pace,
Arrayéd after the lusty season sote,[10]
Lightly for to play, and walk on foot,
Naught but with five or six of her meinie,[11]
And in a trenché[12] forth in the park go'th she. 415

[1] Fumosity—fumes from drinking. [2] There is no charge—no consequence is to be apprehended. [3] Prime large—(Fr. idiom. "*grand matin*,") full day. [4] But it were—except. [5] Measurable—moderate. [6] Liste not appalled—*i. e.* she did not care to grow pale. [7] Unfeastly for to see—to appear unused to feasting. [8] Quainte—curious. [9] Her luste—she wished. [10] Lusty season sote—the pleasant, sweet season. [11] Meinie—attendants. [12] Trenche—if this word mean not, "a narrow valley," I am at a loss to offer an interpretation.

The vapour which that from the earthé glode [1]
Maketh the sun to seemé ruddy and brode;
But nathéless it was so fair a sight
That it made all their heartés for to light,[2]
What for the season and the morrowning, 420
And for the fowlés that she heardé sing,
For right anon she wisté [3] what they meant
Right by their song, and knew all their intent.
The knotté[4] why that every tale is told,
If it be tarried till the lust [5] be cold 425
Of them that have it hearkened after yore,[6]
The savour passeth ever longer the more
For fulsomeness of the prolixity;
And by that samé reason thinketh me
I should unto the knotté condescend, 430
And maken of her walking soon an end.
Amidst a tree for-dry,[7] as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in her walk,
There sat a falcon over her head full high
That with a piteous voice so 'gan to cry, 435
That all the wood resounded of her cry,
And beaten had herself so piteously
With both her wingés till the reddé blood
Ran endélong the tree there as she stood;
And ever in one [8] alway she cried and shright,[9] 440
And with her beak herselven she so twight,[10]
That there n' is [11] tiger ne no cruel beast
That dwelleth either in wood or in forést
That n'olde [12] have wept, if that he weepen could,
For sorrow of her, she shright alway so loud. 445

* * * * *

[What follows is the lamentation of the falcon on account of the light-heartedness and infidelity of her mate. The deserted fair one being somewhat prolix, and withal not interesting in her complaint, we will, with the reader's consent, pass on to the conclusion of the tale. The princess has carried the wounded bird home, which had fainted in her lap, and placed it in a mew at her bed's head, exerting her skill in herbs to cure its wounds.]

Thus lete [13] I Canace her hawk keeping:
I will no more as now speak of her ring,
Till it come eft [14] to purpose for to sain,
How that this falcon got her love again

[1] Glode — glided. [2] To light — to lighten. [3] Wiste — knew. [4] Knotte—the nucleus, or chief matter of a subject. [5] Lust—inclination, desire. [6] Yore—some while. [7] For-dry—quite dry. [8] Ever in one—constantly. [9] Shright—shrieked. [10] Twight—plucked. [11] N'is—is not. [12] N'olde—would not. [13] Lete—leave. [14] Eft—again.

Repentant, as the story telleth us, 450
By mediation of Camballus,
The kingés son, of which that I you told;
But hennésforth I will my process[1] hold
To speak of áventures and of batailles,
That yet was never heard so great marvailles. 455
First will I tellen you of Cambuscan,
That in his timé many a city wan;
And after will I speak of Algarsife,
How that he won Theodora to his wife,
For whom full oft in great perfl he was, 460
Ne had he been holpen[2] by the horse of brass;
And after will I speak of Camballo,
That fought in listés with the brethren two
For Canace, ere that he might her win,
And there[3] I left I will again begin. 465

* * * * *

"Call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold;
Of Cambal and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
And the wond'rous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride."—*Il Pensieroso.**

[1] Process—progress. [2] Holpen—helped. [3] There—where.

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* The bold task of supplying what Chaucer left "untold," was attempted by Spenser in the "Faery Queene," book iv. cantos 2 and 3, to which the reader is referred.

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE.

"IN faith, Squiér, thou hast thee well acquit,
And gentlely : I praisé well thy wit,
Quod the Frankélin. Considering thy youthé
So feelingly thou speakest, Sir, I allue[1] thee.
As to my doom,[2] there is none that is here 5
Of eloquencé that shall be thy peer
If that thou live : God give thee goodé chance,
And in virtúe send thee continuance ;
For of thy speaking I have great dainty.
I have a son, and by the Trinity 10
It were me lever[3] than twenty pound worth land,
Though it right now were fallen in my hand,
He were a man of such discretión
As that ye be. Fie on possessión
But if a man[4] be virtuous withal ! 15
I have my sonné snibbéd[5] and yet shall,
For he to virtue listeth not t' intend,[6]
But for to play at dice and to dispend,
And lose all that he hath, is his uságe ;
And he had lever[7] talken with a page 20
Than to commune with any gentle wight
There[8] he might learén gentilless aright."
"Straw for your gentillessé ! quod our Host.
What? Frankélin, pardé, Sir, well thou wo'st[9]
That each of you must tellen at the least 25
A Tale or two, or breaken his behest."[10]
"That know I well, Sir, quod the Frankélin :
I pray you haveth me not in disdain
Though I to this man speak a word or two."
"Tell on thy Tale withouten wordés mo." 30
"Gladly, Sir Host, quod he, I will obey
Unto your will : now hearkeneth what I say :
I will you not contrárien in no wise,
As far as that my wittés may suffice.
I pray to God that it may pleasen you, 35
Then wot I well that it is good enow.

[1] Allue—(Fr.) praise, applaud. [2] Doom—judgment. [3] It were me lever—I had rather. [4] But if a man—unless a man be, &c. [5] Snibbed—rebuked. [6] For he listeth not to intend—because he careth not to cultivate. [7] Lever—rather. [8] There—where. [9] Wo'st—wottest, knowest. [10] Behest—agreement, promise.

"These oldé gentle Bretons in their days
Of diverse áventurés maden lays
Rhyméd in their firsté Breton tongue,
Which layés with their instruments they sung, 40
Or ellés readen them for their pleasánce,
And one of them have I in rémembrance,
Which I shall say with good will as I can.
"But, Sirs, because I am a borel[1] man,
At my beginning first I you beseech 45
Have me excuséd of my rudé speech :
I learnéd never rhetoric certáin ;
Thing that I speak it must be bare and plain :
I slept never on the Mount of Parnaso,
Nor learnéd Marcus Tullius Cicero. 50
Colóurs[2] ne know I none, withouten drede,[3]
But such colóurs as growen in the mead,
Or ellés such as men dye with or paint;
Colóurs of rhetoric be to me quaint ;[4]
My spirit feeleth[5] not of such mattere : 55
But if you lust,[6] my Talé shall ye hear.

[1] Borel—plain, or, unclerkly. [2] Colours—ornaments, eloquence. [3] Drede—doubt. [4] Quaint—strange. [5] Feeleth—perceiveth. [6] Lust—wish.

" Is there none other grace in you?"—quod he.
" No, by that Lord, quod she, that makéd me."—l. 333.

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE.

IN Armoric', that calléd is Bretagne,
There was a knight that lov'd and did his pain
To serve a lady in his besté wise,
And many a labour, many a great emprise,[1] 60
He for his lady wrought ere she were won,
For she was one the fairest under sun,
And eke thereto comen of so high kindred,
That well unnethés[2] durst this knight for dread
Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress : 65
But at the last she for his worthiness,

[1] Emprise—enterprise. [2] Unnethes—scarcely.

The Franklin's Tale.] Aurelius, after much labour and cost estowed to win the love of Dorigen, another man's wife, is content ı the end, through the good dealing of her and her husband, to ıse both his labour and cost. The scope of this Tale seemeth to e a contention of courtesy.—*Urry.*

If it were for no other motive than the inculcation of the heavenly octrines of HONOUR and TRUTH, I could not have omitted this 'ale, however uncongenial, in the master principle, it may seem ith modern opinions. The original tale is to be found in Boccaccio.

And namely for his meek obeysance,
Hath such a pity caught of his penánce,
That privily she fell of his accord
To take him for her husband and her lord, 70
(Of such lordship as men have o'er their wives)
And, for to lead the more in bliss their lives,
Of his free will he swore her as a knight
That never in all his life, he day or night
Ne shouldé take upon him no mast'ry 75
Against her will, or kithe[1] her jealousy;
But her obey, and follow her will in all,
As any lover to his lady shall,
Savé that the name of sovereignty,
That would he have for shame of his degree. 80
She thankéd him, and with full great humbless
She saidé, "Sir, since of your gentleness
Ye proff'ren me to have so large a reign,
Ne wouldé God never betwixt us twain,
As in my guilt, were either war or strife: 85
Sir, I will be your humble trué wife,
Have here my truth, till that mine hearté brest."[2]
Thus been they both in quiet and in rest.
For one thing, Sirs, safely dare I say,
That friendés evereach other must obey, 90
If they will longé holden company:
Love will not be constrain'd by mastery:
When mast'ry cometh, the god of Love anon
Beateth his wings, and, farewell, he is gone.
Love is a thing, as any spirit, free. 95
Women of kind[3] desiren liberty,
And not to be constrainéd as a thrall;[4]
And so do men, if sothly[5] I say shall.
Look, who that is most patiént in love;
He is at his advantage all above.[6] 100
Patience is a high virtúe certáin,
For it vanqúisheth, as these clerkés sain,
Thingés that rigour never should attain.
For every word men may not chide or plain.
Learneth to suff'ren, or, so may I gone,[7] 105
Ye shall it learn whether ye will or non;
For in this world certáin no wight there is
That he ne doth or say'th sometimes amiss.
Ire, sickness, or constellatión,
Wine, woe, or changing of complexión, 110

[1] Kithe—show. [2] Brest—burst, break. [3] Of kind—by nature. [4] Thrall—slave. [5] Sothly—truly. [6] He is, &c.—*i.e.* "he is in possession of every advantage." [7] So may I gone—so may I prosper.

V. 109. *Constellation.*] Influence attributed to certain stars on

Causeth full oft to do amiss or speaken :
On every wrong a man may not be wreaken.[1]
After the timé must be temperance
To every wight that can of governance :[2]
And therefore hath this worthy wisé knight 115
(To liven in ease) suff'rance her behight,[3]
And she to him full wifely 'gan to swear,
That never should there be default in her.
Here may men see a humble wife accord ;
Thus hath she take her servant and her lord, 120
Servant in love and lord in marriáge.
Then was he both in lordship and serváge ?
Servage ! nay, but in lordship all above,
Since he hath both his lady and his love ;
His lady certés, and his wife also, 125
The which that law of love accordeth to.
And when he was in this prosperity,
Home with his wife he go'th to countrý,
Not far from Penmark, there[4] his dwelling was,
Whereas he liveth in bliss and in soláce. 130
Who couldé tell, (but he had wedded be,)
The joy, the ease, and the prosperity,
That is betwixt a husband and his wife ?
A year and more lasteth this blissful life,
Till that this knight, of which I spake of thus, 135
That of Cairrud was clep'd Arviragus,
Shope[5] him to go and dwell a year or twain
In Engleland, that clep'd was eke Bretagne,
To seek in armés worship and honóur,
(For all his lust[6] he set in such labóur) 140
And dwelté there two year: the book saith thus.
Now will I stint[7] of this Arviragus,
And speak I will of Dorigen his wife,
That loveth her husband as her heartés life.

[1] Wreaken—revenged, visited with punishment. [2] Can of governance—is capable of governing. [3] Behight—promised. [4] There—where. [5] Shope—shaped, prepared. [6] Lust—delight. [7] Stint—cease.

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the human disposition. See Note 58, Act i. Tw. Night, in Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare, annotated by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke.

V. 129. *Penmark.*] On the west coast of Bretagne, between Brest and Port L'Orient.—*Tyr.*

V. 136. *Cairrud.*] This word is of British origin, and signifies the *red city.*—*Tyr.*

For his absénce weepeth she and siketh,[1] 145
As do these noble wivés when them liketh :
She mourneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, plaineth :
Desire of his presénce her so distraineth,
That all this widé world she set at naught.
Her friendés, which that knew her heavy thought, 150
Comfórten her in all that e'er they may ;
They preachen her, they tell her night and day
That causéless she slay'th herself, alas!
And every cómfórt possíble in this case
They do to her with all their business,[2] 155
All for to make her leave her heaviness.
By process, as ye knowen evereach one,
Men may so longé graven in a stone
Till some figúre therein imprinted be :
So long have they comfórted her, till she 160
Receivéd hath, by hope and by reasón,
Th' imprinting of their consolatión,
Through which her greaté sorrow 'gan assuage :
She may not alway duren in such rage.
And eke Arviragus, in all this care, 165
Hath sent his letters home of his welfáre,
And that he will come hastily again,
Or ellés had this sorrow her hearté slain.
Her friendés saw her sorrow 'gan to slack,
And praiden her on knees, for Goddés sake, 170
To come and roamen in their company,
Away to drive her darké fantasy :
And, finally, she granted that request,
For well she saw that it was for the best.
Now stood her castle fasté by the sea, 175
And often with her friendés walkéd she,
Her to disporten on the bankés high,
Where as she many a ship and bargé sie[3]
Sailing their course where as them list to go :
But then was that a parcel of her woe, 180
For to herself full oft, "Alas ! said she,
Is there no ship, of so many' as I see,
Will bringen home my lord ? then were my heart
All warish'd[4] of his bitter painés smart."
Another timé would she sit and think, 185
And cast her eyen downward from the brink ;
But when she saw the grisly rockés black,
For very fear so would her hearté quake,
That on her feet she might her not sustain :
Then would she sit adown upon the green, 190

[1] Siketh—sigheth. [2] Business—assiduity. [3] Sie—saw. [4] Warish'd—relieved, cured.

And piteously into the sea behold,
And say right thus, with careful sikés[1] cold :
" Eterné God ! that through thy púrveyance
Leadest this world by certain governance ;
In idle,[2] as men say, ye nothing make : 195
But, Lord ! these grisly fiendly rockés black,
That seemen rather a foul confusión
Of work than any fair creatión
Of such a perfect wisé God and stable ;
Why have ye wrought this work unreasonáble ? 200
For by this work north, south, ne west, ne east,
There n'is[3] yfoster'd man, ne bird, ne beast :
It doth no good to my wit, but annoyeth.[4]
See ye not, Lord ! how mánkind it destroyeth ?
A hundred thousand bodies of mankind 205
Have rockés slain, all be they not in mind,
Which mankind is so fair part of thy work,
Thou madest it like to thine owen mark.[5]
Then, seemeth it, ye had a great cherté[6]
Towárd mankind ; but how then may it be 210
That ye such meanés make it to destroyen,
Which meanés do no good, but ever annoyen ?
" I wot well clerkés will say as them lest,[7]
By arguments, that all is for the best,
Though I ne can the causes naught yknow ; 215
But thilké God that made the wind to blow,
As keep my lord ; [8] this is my conclusión ;
To clerkés let I all dispútison :[9]
But wouldé God that all these rockés black
Were sunken into hellé for his sake : 220
These rockés slay mine hearté for the fear."
Thus would she say with many a piteous tear.
Her friendés saw that it was no disport
To roamen by the sea, but díscomfort,
And shape them for to playen somewhere else. 225
They leaden her by rivers and by wells,[10]
And eke in other places délitable ;
They dancen, and they play at chess and tables.[11]
So on a day, right in the morrow tide,
Unto a garden that was there beside, 230

[1] Sikes—sighs. [2] In idle—in vain. [3] N'is—is not. [4] Annoyeth—doth harm. [5] Owen mark—thine own image. [6] Cherte—love. [7] Them lest—it pleaseth them. [8] As keep my lord—*i. e.* "as he made the winds to blow, so may he keep my lord." [9] Disputison—disputation. [10] Wells—springs. [11] Tables—a game with a board and men ;—I believe tric-trac, or backgammon. It is evident from the rhyming word in the preceding line, that "tables" was pronounced after the manner of the French plural of nouns,—making the final *s* mute.

In which that they had made their ordinance [1]
Of vitaille and of other púrveyance,
They go and play them all the longé day;
And this was on the sixté morrow of May;
Which May had painted with his softé showers 235
This garden full of leavés and of flowers;
And craft of mannés hand so curiously
Arrayéd had this garden truély,
That never was there garden of such price,
But if [2] it were the very Paradise. 240
Th' odóur of flow'rés and the freshé sight
Would have ymakéd any hearté light
That e'er was born, but if [2] too great sicknéss
Or too great sorrow held it in distress;—
So full it was of beauty and pleasánce. 245
And after dinner gonnen they to dance
And sing also, save Dorigen alone,
Which made alway her cómplaint and her moan.
For she ne saw him on the dancé go,
That was her husband and her love also: 250
But nathéless [3] she must a time abide,
And with good hopé let her sorrow slide.
Upon this dance, amongés other men,
Dancéd a squiér before Dorigen,
That fresher was and jollier of array, 255
As to my doom,[4] than is the month of May.
He singeth, danceth, passing any man
That is, or was since that the world began;
Therewith he was, if men should him descrive,
One of the besté faring [5] men on live; 260
Young, strong, and virtuous, and rich, and wise,
And well belov'd, and holden in great prise.[6]
And, shortly, if the soth I tellen shall,
Unweeting [7] of this Dorigen at all,
This lusty squiér, servant to Venus, 265
Which that yclepéd was Aurelius,
Had lov'd her best of any creáture
Two years and more, as was his áventure,[8]
But never durst he tell her his grievánce:
Withouten cup he drank all his penánce.[9] 270
He was despaired; nothing durst he say,
Save in his songés somewhat would he 'wray [10]

[1] Ordinance—disposition, display. [2] But if—unless. [3] Natheless—nevertheless. [4] Doom—judgment. [5] Beste faring—best looking. [6] Prise—praise. [7] Unweeting—unsuspecting. [8] Aventure—fortune. [9] Withouten cup, &c.—*i. e.* "without a cup to pour it out, he drank off his penance." [10] 'Wray—betray.

His woe, as in a general complaining;
He said he lov'd and was belov'd nothing.
Of such matteré made he many lays, 275
Songés, complaintés, roundels, virélays;[1]
How that he dursté not his sorrow tell,
But languisheth as doth a Fury' in hell;
And die he must, he said, as did Echó
For Narcissus, that durst not tell her woe. 280
In other manner than ye hear me say
Ne durst he not to her his woe bewray,
Save that paráventure sometime at dances,
There[2] youngé folk keepen their óbservánces,
It may well be, he lookéd on her face 285
In such a wise, as man that asketh grace;[3]
But nothing wisté she of his intent.
Nathless it happéd ere they thennés went,
Becausé that he was her neighébour,
And was a man of worship and honóur, 290
And had yknowen him of timé yore,[4]
They fell in speech, and forth aye more and more
Unto his purpose drew Aurelius,
And when he saw his time he saidé thus:
"Madáme, quod he, by God, that this world made,
So that I wist it might your hearté glad, 296
I would that day that your Arviragus
Went over sea, that I Aurelius
Had gone there[2] I should never come again,
For well I wot my service is in vain; 300
My guerdon[5] n'is but bursting of mine heart.
Madamé, rue upon my painés smart,

[1] Roundels, virelays—*see note below.* [2] There—where. [3] Grace—favour. [4] Time yore—time past. [5] Guerdon—reward.

V. 276. *roundels, virelays.*] The roundel, or rondeau, was one of the short poems invented in the thirteenth century. "It consisted," according to Mr. Godwin, "of thirteen verses, disposed according to a certain rule, of which eight have one rhyme, and five another; it is divided into three stanzas, and at the end of the second and third, the beginning of the rondeau is repeated, in an equivocal sense, if possible. There is a specimen of an ancient rondeau in Ste. Palaye, consisting of a smaller number of verses." See "*Notice des poesies de Froissart, par Ste. Palaye, Mem. de l'Académie des Inscriptions,*" tom. xiv.

The virelay is unsatisfactorily described by Cotgrave to be, "a round Freeman's Song." There is a particular description of a virelay in the *Jardin de Plaisance*, fol. 12.—*Gloss.* Mr. Tyrwhitt conjectures that the short poem in Chaucer's works, beginning—

"Alone walking in thought plaining,"

may be taken as a specimen of the virelay.

For with a word ye may me slay or save.
Here at your feet God would that I were grave.[1]
I n' have as now no leisure more to say : 305
Have mercy, sweet ! or ye will do me dey."[2]
She 'gan to look upon Aurelius :
" Is this your will, (quod she) and say ye thus?
Ne'er erst[3] (quod she) ne wist[4] I what ye meant ;
But now I know, Aurelie', your intent. 310
By thilké God that gave me soul and life
Ne shall I never be an untrue wife
In word or work, as far as I have wit ;
I will be his to whom that I am knit :
Take this for final answer as of me." 315
But after that, in play thus saidé she :
" Aurelius, (quod she) by God above
Yet will I granten you to be your love,
(Since I you see so piteously complain.)
Look ;—what day that endélong[5] Bretagne 320
Ye remue[6] all the rockés stone by stone,
That they ne letten[7] ship ne boat to gone ;
I say, when ye have made the coast so clean
Of rockés that there n'is no stone yseen,
Then will I love you best of any man ; 325
Have here my truth, in all that ever I can ;
For well I wot that it shall ne'er betide.
Let such folíe out of your hearté glide :
What deintee should a man have in his life
For to go love another mannés wife ?" 330

* * * * *

Aurelius full often soré siketh :[8]
" Is there none other grace in you ?" quod he.
" No, by that Lord, quod she, that makéd me."
Woe was Aurelie when that he this heard, 335
And with a sorrowful heart he thus answér'd :
" Madáme, quod he, this were impossíble ;
Then must I die of sudden death horríble."
And with that word he turnéd him anon.
Then come her other friendés many one, 340
And in the alleys roaméd up and down,
And nothing wist of this conclusión,
But suddenly begonnen revel new,
Till that the brighté sun had lost his hue,
For th' órizon had reft the sun his light, 345
(This is as much to say that it was night)

[1] Grave—graved, laid in my grave. [2] Do me dey—cause me to die. [3] Erst—before. [4] Wist—knew, conjectured. [5] Endelong—from end to end. [6] Remue—remove. [7] Ne letten—do not prevent. [8] Siketh—sigheth.

And home they gone in mirth and in soláce,
Save only wretch Aurelius, alas!
He to his house is gone with sor'wful heart;
He saith he may not from his death astart:[1] 350
Him seemeth that he felt his hearté cold.
Up to the heaven his handés 'gan he hold,
And on his kneés bare he set him down,
And in his raving said his orison.[2]
For very woe out of his wit he braid;[3] 355
He n'isté[4] what he spake, but thus he said;
With piteous heart his plaint hath he begun
Unto the gods; and first unto the Sun.
He said; "Apollo! god and governor
Of every planté, herbé, tree, and flow'r, 360
That givest after thy declinatión
To each of them his time and his season,
As that thine harbour[5] changeth low and high,
Lord Phœbus! cast thy merciable eye
On wretch Aurelie, which that am but lorn: 365
Lo, Lord! my lady hath my death ysworn
Withouten guilt; but thy benignity
Upon my deadly heart have some pitý:
For well I wot, Lord Phœbus, if you lest,
Ye may me helpen save my lady best. 370
Now voucheth safe that I may you devise[6]
How that I may be holp,[7] and in what wise.
"Your blissful sister, Lúcina the sheen,[8]
That of the sea is chief goddéss and queen,
Though Neptunus have deity in the sea, 375
Yet emperess aboven him is she:
Ye know well, Lord, that right as her desire
Is to be quick'd[9] and lighted of your fire,
For which she foll'weth you full busily,
Right so the sea desireth naturally 380
To follow her, as she that is goddéss
Both in the sea and rivers more and less:
Wherefore, Lord Phœbus! this is my request,
Do this mirácle', or do mine hearté brest,[10]
That now next at this oppositión, 385
Which in the sign shall be of the Lión,
As prayeth her so great a flood to bring,
That five fathóm at least it overspring
The highest rock in Armoric' Bretagne,
And let this flood enduren yearés twain; 390

[1] Astart—escape. [2] Orison—prayer. [3] Braid—ran, wandered. N'iste — ne wist, knew not. [5] Harbour — residence, dwelling. Devise—describe. [7] Holp—helped. [8] Sheen—shining. [9] Quicked —made alive. [10] Do mine hearte, &c.—cause my heart to break.

Then certés to my lady may I say,
Holdeth your hest,[1] the rockés be away.
Lord Phœbus! this mirácle doth[2] for me,
Pray her she go no faster course than ye;
I say this, prayeth your sister that she go 395
No faster course than ye these yearés two,
Then shall she be even at full alway,
And spring-flood lasten bothé night and day.
And but she vouchésafe in such mannére
To granten me my sovereign lady dear, 400
Pray her to sinken every rock adown
Into her owen darké región
Under the ground, there[3] Pluto dwelleth in,
Or nevermore shall I my lady win.
"Thy temple in Delphos will I barefoot seek. 405
Lord Phœbus! see the tearés on my cheek,
And on my pain have some compassión."
And with that word in sorr'w he fell adown,
And longé time he lay forth in a trance.
His brother, which that knew of his penánce, 410
Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought.
Despairéd in this torment and this thought
Let I this woful creáturé lie,—
Choose he whether he will live or die.
Arviragus with heal and great honóur 415
(As he that was of chivalry the flow'r)
Is comen home, and other worthy men:
O, blissful art thou now, thou Dorigen!
That hast thy lusty husband in thine arms,
The freshé knight, the worthy man of arms, 420
That loveth thee as his owen heartés life.
Nothing list him[4] to be imaginatif
If any wight had spoke while he was out
To her of love; he had of that no doubt:
He not intendeth[5] to no such mattére, 425
But danceth, jousteth, and maketh merry cheer.
And thus in joy and bliss I let them dwell,
And of the sick Aurelius will I tell.
In languor and in torment furious
Two year and more lay wretch'd Aurelius 430
Ere any foot on earth he mighté gone;
Nor comfort in this timé had he none,
Save of his brother, which that was a clerk:
He knew of all this woe and all this work;

[1] Holdeth your hest—keep your promise. [2] Doth (imperative)—do. [3] There—where. [4] Nothing list him, &c.—he cared not to fancy. [5] Intendeth—inclineth.

For to none other creáture certáin 435
Of this mattére he dursté no word sain:
Under his breast he bare it more secree
Than ever did Pamphilus for Galatee.
His breast was whole withouten for to seen,
But in his heart aye was the arrow keen, 440
And well ye know that of a sursanure[1]
In surgery is perilous the cure,
But men might touch the arrow or come thereby.[2]
His brother weepeth and waileth privily,
Till at the last him fell in rémembrance 445
That while he was at Orleans in France,
As youngé clerkés that be likerous[3]
To readen artés that be curious
Seeken in every halk and every hern[4]
Particular sciénces for to learn, 450
He him remember'd that upon a day
At Orleans, in study' a book he say[5]
Of magic natural, which his fellaw
That was that time a bachelor of law,
Al'[6] were he there to learn another craft, 455
Had privily upon his desk ylaft;
Which book spake much of operatións
Touching the eight-and-twenty mansións
That 'longen to the moon, and such follý
As in our dayés n'is not worth a fly; 460
For holy church's faith, in our believe,
Ne suff'reth no illusion us to grieve.
And when this book was in his rémembrance
Anon for joy his hearté 'gan to dance,
And to himself he saiéd privily; 465
"My brother shall be warish'd[7] hastily;
For I am siker[8] that there be sciénces
By which men maken divers apparences,
Such as these subtle tragetourés[9] play;
For oft at feastés have I well heard say 470
That tragetours, within a hallé large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,

[1] Sursanure—a wound healed on the surface. [2] Come thereby—*i.e.* (as I conceive) "men might touch, or miss the arrow" in probing the wound. [3] Likerous—greedy, eager. [4] Halk, hern—both words signify a corner; we should say "in every hole and corner." [5] Say—saw. [6] Al' — although. [7] Warished — healed. [8] Siker—certain. [9] Tragetoures—players: in this sense they are to be considered as jugglers. See a very full and satisfactory note upon this passage in Tyrwhitt's edition.

V. 438. *Pamphilus, &c.*] The amour of Pamphilus and Galatea, a Latin poem popular in Chaucer's time.

And in the hallé rowen up and down;
Sometime hath seeméd come a grim leóun,
And sometimes flow'rés spring as in a mead, 475
Sometimes a vine, and grapés white and rede,
Sometimes a castle all of lime and stone,
And when them liketh, voideth it anon :
Thus seemeth it to every mannés sight.
"Now then conclude I thus ; if that I might 480
At Orleans some oldé fellow find
That hath these moonés mansións in mind,
Or other magic natural above,
He should well make my brother have his love ;
For with an ápparence a clerk may make, 485
To mannés sight, that all the rockés black
Of Bretagne were yvoided evereach one,
And shippés by the brinké come and gone,
And in such form endure a day or two :
Then were my brother warish'd[1] of his woe, 490
Then must she needés holden her behest,[2]
Or ellés he shall shame her at the least."
What should I make a longer Tale of this ?
Unto his brother's bed he comen is,
And such comfórt he gave him for to gone 495
To Orleans, that he up start' anon,
And on his way forthwárd then is he fare,[3]
In hope for to be lissed[4] of his care.
When they were come almost to that citée,
But if it were a two furlong or three, 500
A youngé clerk roaming by' himself they met,
Which that in Latin thriftily[5] them gret :[6]
And after that he said a wonder thing ;
"I know, quod he, the cause of your coming :"
And ere they farther any footé went, 505
He told them all that was in their intent.
This Breton clerk him asked of fellaws
The which he had yknown in oldé dawes,[7]
And he answér'd him that they deadé were,
For which he wept full often many a tear. 510
Down off his horse Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magicián is gone
Home to his house, and made them well at ease :
Them lackéd no vitáille that might them please.
So well arraiéd, house as there was one, 515
Aurelius in his life saw never none.

[1] Warish'd—cured. [2] Behest—promise. [3] Fare—(for) fared, gone. [4] Lissed—relieved. [5] Thriftily—shortly, sparingly. [6] Gret—greeted. [7] Dawes—days.

He shewéd him, ere they went to soupére,
Forestés, parkés, full of wildé deer :
There saw he hartés with their hornés high,
The greatest that were ever seen with eye : 520
He saw of them a hundred slain with hounds,
And some with arrows bleed of bitter wounds :
He saw, when voided were the wildé deer,
These falconers upon a fair rivére
That with their hawkés had the herón slain. 525
Then saw he knightés jousten in a plain :
And after this he did him such pleasánce,
That he him shew'd his lady on a dance,
On which himselven dancéd. as he thought.
And when this master, that this magic wrought, 530
Saw it was time, he clapp'd his handés two,
And farewell, all the revel is ago !
And yet remu'd [1] they ne'er out of the house,
While they saw all these sightes marvellous,
But in his study, there [2] his bookés be 535
They saten still, and no wight but they three.
To him this master calléd his squiér,
And said him thus ; "May we go to supper?
Almost an hour it is, I undertake,
Since I you bade our supper for to make, 540
When that these worthy men wenten with me
Into my study there [2] my bookés be."
"Sir, quod this squiér, when it liketh you,
It is all ready, though ye will right now."
"Go we then sup, quod he, as for the best ; 545
These amorous folk sometimé must have rest."
At after supper fell they in treaty
What summé should this master's guerdon [3] be
To rémue all the rockés of Bretagne,
And eke from Geronde to the mouth of Seine. 550
He made it strange,[4] and swore, so God him save,
Less than a thousand pounds he would not have,

[1] Remued—removed. [2] There—(for) where. [3] Guerdon—reward. [4] Made it strange—made a difficulty of it.

V. 536. *no wight but they three.*] A circumstantial account of one of these magical incantations is given in Benvenuto Cellini's auto-biography: in which he professes to have assisted, and to have been an eye-witness of it. What portion of credit is to be affixed to his narration, the reader may conceive, when informed that the same hair-brained genius records, as a fact, his father's having drawn his attention one evening, while he was yet a boy, to a bona-fide *salamander* in their parlour fire ; and of his impressing the circumstance upon his memory by a sound cuff on the head.

Ne gladly for that sum he would not gone.[1]
  Aurelius with blissful heart anon
Answeréd thus ; "Fie on a thousand pound! 555
This widé world, which that men say is round,
I would it give, if I were lord of it.
This bargain is full drive, for we be knit.[2]
Ye shall be paiéd truly, by my truth;
But looketh, for no negligence or sloth: 560
Ye tarry' us here no longer than to-morrow."
"Nay, quod this clerk, have here my faith to-borrow."[3]
  To bed is gone Aurelius when him lest,
And well nigh all that night he had his rest.
What for his labour and his hope of bliss, 565
His woful heart of penance had a liss.[4]
  Upon the morrow when that it was day
To Bretagne tooken they the righté way,
Aurelie', and this magician him beside,
And been descended there[5] they would abide : 570
And this was, as the bookés me remember,
The coldé frosty season of December.
  Phœbus wax'd old and huéd like Laton,[6]
That in his hoté declinatión
Shone as the burnéd gold with streamés bright; 575
But now in Capricorn adown he light,
Where as he shone full pale, I dare well sain.
The bitter frosté with the sleet and rain
Destroyéd hath the green in every yard;
Janus sits by the fire with double beard, 580
And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine;
Before him stands brawn of the tuskéd swine,
And "Nowel!" crieth every lusty man.
  Aurelius in all that ever he can,
Doth to his master cheer and reverence, 585
And praieth him to do his diligence
To bringen him out of his painés smart,
Or with a sword that he would slit his heart.
  This subtle clerk such ruth hath on this man,
That night and day he speed'th him that he can 590

[1] Gone—(for) go. [2] Knit—plighted, joined. [3] Faith to borrow—faith for a pledge. [4] Lisse—release, abatement. [5] There—where. [6] Laton — mixed metal, brass.

V. 583. *And Nowel crieth.*] *Noël*, in French, is derived from *natalis*, and signified originally a cry of joy at Christmas, "Le jour natal de notre Seigneur." *Menage*, in v. *Nouel*. It was afterwards the usual cry of the people upon all occasions of joy and festivity.—*Tyr.*

To wait a time of his conclusión ;
This is to say, to make illusión,
By such an ápparence or jugglery,
(I can [1] no termés of astrology)
That she and every wight should ween and say 595
That of Bretagne the rockés were away,
Or ellés they were sunken under ground.
So at the last he hath his time yfound
To make his japés [2] and his wretchedness
Of such a superstitious cursedness. 600
His tables Toletanés forth he brought,
Full well corrected, that there lackéd naught,
Neither his collect nor his expanse years,
Neither his rootés nor his other gears,
As been his centres and his arguments, 605
And his proportional convenients,
For his equatións in every thing :
And by his eighté spheres in his working
He knew full well how far Alnath was shove
From the head of thilke fixe [3] Aries above 610
That in the ninthé sphere considered is :
Full subtlely he calculéd all this
When he had found his firsté mansión
He knew the reménant by proportión,
And knew the rising of his mooné well, 615
And in whose face, and term, and every deal ; [4]
And knew full well the moonés mansión
Accordant to his operatión ;
And knew also his other óbservances,
For such illusións and such mischances 620
As Heathen folk uséd in thilké days;
For which no longer maketh he delays,
But through his magic, for a day or tway,
It seeméd all the rockés were away.
Aurelius, which that despairéd is 625
Whether he shall have his love or fare amiss,
Awaiteth night and day on this mirácle ;
And when he knew that there was no obstácle,
That voided were these rockés evereach one,
Down to his master's feet he fell anon, 630

[1] I can no termes—I know no terms. [2] Japes—tricks. [3] Thilke fixe—that fixed. [4] Every deal—each particular.

V. 601. *His tables Toletanes.*] The astronomical tables composed by order of Alphonso X. King of Castile, about the middle of the thirteenth century, were called sometimes *Tabulæ Toletanæ*, from their being adapted to the city of Toledo. There is a very elegant copy of them in MS. *Harl.* 3647.—*Tyr.*

And said; "I, woful wretch Aurelius,
Thank you, my lord, and lady mine Venus,
That me have holpen from my carés cold."
And to the temple' his way forth hath he hold,
Thereas he knew he should his lady see; 635
And when he saw his time, anon right he
With dreadful[1] heart and with full humble cheer
Saluted hath his sovereign lady dear.
"My rightful Lady, quod this woful man,
Whom I most dread and love as I best can, 640
And lothest were of all this world displease,
N'ere[2] it that I for you have such disease[3]
That I must die here at your foot anon,
Naught would I tell how me is woe begone;
But certés either must I die or plain; 645
Ye slay me guiltéless for very pain:
But of my death though that ye have no ruth,
Aviseth you ere that you break your truth:
Repenteth you, for thilké God above,
Ere ye me slay, because that I you love: 650
For, Madam, well ye wot what ye have hight;
Not that I challenge any thing of right
Of you my sovereign Lady, but of grace;[4]
But in a garden yond, in such a place,
Ye wot right well what ye behighten[5] me, 655
And in mine hand your truthé plighten ye
To love me best: God wot ye saiéd so,
Although that I unworthy be thereto.
Madáme, I speak it for the honour of you,
More than to save my heartés life right now, 660
I have done so as ye commanded me;
And if ye vouchésafe ye may go see.
Do as you list, have your behest[6] in mind,
For quick or dead right there ye shall me find.
In you li'th all to do me live or dey, 665
But well I wot the rockés be away."
He taketh his leave, and she astonied stood;
In all her facé n'as[7] one drop of blood:
She weenéd[8] never have come in such a trap.
"Alas! quod she, that ever this should hap! 670
For ween'd I never by possibility
That such a monster or marvaille might be:
It is against the process of Natúre."
And home she go'th a sorrowful creature;

[1] Dreadful—fearful. [2] N'ere—were it not. [3] Disease—discomfort. [4] Grace — favour, free-will. [5] Behighten — promised. [6] Behest — promise. [7] N'as — was not. [8] Weened — thought.

For very fear unnethés[1] may she go. 675
She weepeth, waileth, all a day or two,
And swooneth that it ruthé was to see,
But why it was, to no wight toldé she,
For out of town was gone Arviragus;
But to herself she spake, and saiéd thus, 680
With facé pale, and with full sorry cheer,
In her complaint, as ye shall after hear.
"Alas! quod she, on thee, Fortúne, I plain,
That unware hast me wrappéd in thy chain,
From which to 'scapen wot I no succóur 685
Save only death or ellés dishonóur:
One of these two behoveth me to choose.
But nathéless, yet had I lever[2] lose
My life, than of my body have a shame,
Or know myselven false, or lose my name: 690
And with my death I may be quit ywis;
Hath there not many a noble wife ere this,
And many a maid, yslain herself, alas!
Rather than with her body do trespass?"
* * * * *
Thus plainéd Dorigen a day or tway, 695
Purpósing ever that she wouldé dey[3];
But nathéless upon the thirdé night
Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight,
And askéd her why that she wept so sore?
And she 'gan weepen e'er longér the more. 700
"Alas, quod she, that ever I was born!
Thus have I said, (quod she) thus have I sworn."
And told him all, as ye have heard before:
It needeth not rehearse it you no more.
This husband with glad cheer, in friendly wise, 705
Answér'd and said as I shall you devise;
"Is there ought ellés, Dorigen, but this?"
"Nay, nay, quod she, God help me so, as wis[4]
This is too much, and it were Goddés will."
"Yea, wife, quod he, let sleepen that is still;[5] 710
It may be well par'venture yet to-day.
Ye shall your truthé holden by my fay;[6]
For God so wisly[4] havé mercy' on me,
I had well lever[7] sticked for to be,
For very love which that I to you have, 715
But if ye should your truthé keep and save:

[1] Unnethes—scarcely. [2] Lever—rather. [3] Dey—die. [4] Wis—assuredly. [5] Let sleepen, &c.—let that sleep which is still. [6] Fay—faith. [7] I had well lever, &c.—*i. e.* "for the very love I bear you, I had rather be slain, than that you should lose your truth."

Truth is the highest thing that man may keep."
But with that word he burst anon to weep,
And said ; "I you forbid, on pain of death,
That never while you lasteth life or breath 720
To no wight tell ye this misáventure ;
As I may best I will my woe endure :
Ne make no countenance of heaviness,
That folk of you may deemen harm or guess."
And forth he clep'd a squiér and a maid. 725
"Go forth anon with Dorigen, he said,
And bringeth her to such a place anon."
They take their leave, and on their way they gone :
But they ne wisten why she thither went ;
She n'oldé[1] no wight tellen her intent. 730
This squire which that hight Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorous,
Of áventuré happen'd her to meet
Amid the town, right in the quickest[2] street,
As she was bound to go the way forthright 735
Towárd the garden, there as she had hight ;[3]
And he was to the gardenward also,
For well he spiéd when she wouldé go
Out of her house to any manner place :
But thus they met of áventure or grace, 740
And he salueth her with glad intent,
And asketh of her whitherward she went.
And she answéréd, half as she were mad ;
"Unto the garden, as my husband bade,
My truthé for to hold, alas ! alas !" 745
Aurelius 'gan wonder on this case,
And in his heart had great compassión
Of her, and of her lamentatión,
And of Arviragus, the worthy knight,
That bade her holden all that she had hight,[3] 750
So loth him was his wife should break her truth ;
And in his heart he caught of it great ruth,
Considering the best on every side,
That from his lust yet were him lever[4] abide
Than do so high a churlish wretchedness 75[illegible]
Against franchise[5] and allé gentleness ;
For which in fewé wordés said he thus :
"Madáme, say to your Lord Arviragus,
That since I see the greaté gentlenéss,
Of him, and eke I see well your distress, 7[illegible]
That him were lever[4] have shame (and that were ru[illegible]
Than ye to me should breaken thus your truth,

[1] N'olde—would not. [2] Quickest — readiest. [3] Hight—[illegible] she had promised. [4] Lever—rather. [5] Franchise—generosity.

I had well lever ever to suff'ren woe
Than to depart the love betwixt you two.
I you release, Madáme; into your hond 765
Quit every surément[1] and every bond
That ye have made to me as herebeforn
Since thilké timé that ye were yborn.
Have here my truth, I shall you ne'er repreve[2]
Of no behest;[3] and here I take my leave, 770
As of the truest and the besté wife
That ever yet I knew in all my life.
But every wife beware of her behest;
On Dorigen rememb'reth at the least.
Thus can a squire do a gentle deed 775
As well as can a knight, withouten drede."[4]
She thanketh him upon her kneés bare,
And home unto her husband is she fare,[5]
And told him all as ye have heard me said;
And, trusteth me, he was so well apaid,[6] 780
That it were impossíble me to write.
What should I longer of this case indite?
Arviragus and Dorigen his wife
In sovereign blissé ledden forth their life,
Ne'er eft[7] ne was there anger them between; 785
He cherish'd her as though she were a queen,
And she was to him true for evermore.
Of these two folk ye get of me no more.
Aurelius, that his cost hath all forlorn,
Curseth the time that ever he was born. 790
"Alas! quod he, alas that I behight[8]
Of puréd gold a thousand pound of weight
Unto this philosópher! how shall I do?
I see no more but that I am fordo[9]
Mine heritagé must I needés sell, 795
And be a beggar; here I will not dwell,
And shamen all my kindred in this place,
But I of him may getten better grace:[10]
But nathéless I will of him essay
At certain dayés year by year to pay, 800
And thank him of his greaté courtesy.
My truthé will I keep, I will not lie."
With hearté sore he go'th unto his coffer,
And broughté gold unto this philosópher,

[1] Surement—security. [2] Repreve—reproach. [3] Behest—promise. [4] Drede—doubt. [5] Fare—(for) fared, gone. [6] Apaid—pleased, satisfied. [7] Eft—after, again. [8] Behight—promised. [9] Fordo—fordone, ruined. [10] But I of him, &c.—"unless I can obtain better terms, or favour, from him."

The value of five hundred pound I guess, 805
And him beseecheth of his gentleness
To grant him dayés of the reménant,
And saidé; "Master, I dare well make avaunt
I failéd never of my truth as yet;
For sikerly[1] my debté shall be quit 810
Towardés you, how so that e'er I fare
To go a begging in my kirtle bare:
But would ye vouchen safe upon suretý
Two years or three for to respíten me,
Then were I well, for ellés must I sell 815
Mine heritage; there is no more to tell."
This philosópher soberly answér'd,
And sayéd thus, when he these wordés heard;
"Have I not holden covenant to thee?"
"Yes, certés, well and truély," quod he. 820
"Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liketh?"
"No, no," quod he, and sorrowfully' he siketh.
"What was the causé? tell me, if thou can."
Aurelius his tale anon began,
And told him all as ye have heard before; 825
It needeth not rehearse it any more.
He said, "Arviragus of gentleness
Had lever die in sorrow' and in distress
Than that his wife were of her truthé false.
The sorrow of Dorigen he told him als, 830
How loth her was to be a wicked wife,
And that she lever had lost that day her life;
And that her truth she swore through innocence;
She ne'er erst had heard speak of appárence:
That made me have of her so great pity, 835
And right as freely' as he sent her to me,
As freely sent I her to him again.
This is all and some; there is no more to sain."
The philosópher answer'd; "Levé[2] brother,
Evereach of you did gentlely to other: 840
Thou art a squiér, and he is a knight,
But God forbedé, for his blissful might,
But if a clerk could do a gentle deed
As well as any of you, it is no drede.[3]
"Sir, I releasé thee thy thousand pound, 845
As thou right now were crope[4] out of the ground,
Ne ne'er ere now ne haddest knowen me:
For, Sir, I will not take a penny' of thee

[1] Sikerly—assuredly. [2] Leve—dear. [3] But if a clerk, &c. *i. e.* "but that without doubt a clerk could do a gentle deed as as any of you." [4] Crope—crept.

For all my craft, ne naught for my travaille :
Thou hast ypaiéd well for my vitaille. 850
It is enough, and farewell, have good day."
And took his horse, and forth he go'th his way.
  Lordings, this question would I asken now,
Which was the mosté free,[1] as thinketh you ?
Now telleth me ere that ye farther wend.
I can no more, my Tale is at an end. 856

[1] Free- bountiful.

THE PARDONER'S PROLOGUE.

OUR Hosté 'gan to swear as he were wood.[1]
"Harrow! quod he, by nailés and by blood,
This was a false churl and a false justíce.*
As shameful death as hearté can devise
Come to these judgés and their advocas.[2] 5
Algate[3] this sely[4] maid is slain, alas!
Alas! to dear abought she her beauty;
Wherefore I say that all day man may see
That giftés of Fortúne and of Natúre
Been cause of death to many' a creáture. 10
Her beauty was her death, I dare well sain:
Alas! so piteously as she was slain.
Of bothé giftés that I speak of now
Men have full often more for harm than prow.[5]
"But truély, mine owen master dear, 15
This was a piteous Talé for to hear;
But nathéless pass over; is no force.[6]
I pray to God to save thy gentle corse,
* * * * *
Thine Hippocras, and eke thy Galiens,
And every boist[7] full of thy lectuary 20
God bless them and our Lady Saint Mary.
So mote I the[8] thou art a proper man,
And like a prelate, by Saint Ronian.
Said I not well? I cannot speak in term;[9]
But well I wot thou dost my heart to erme,[10] 25
That I have almost caught a cardiácle:[11]
By *corpus Domini* but I have triácle,[12]
Or else a draught of moist[13] and corny ale,
Or but I hear anon a merry Tale,

[1] Wood—mad. [2] Advocas, (Fr. *avocats*)—counsellors. [3] Algate—nevertheless. [4] Sely—innocent. [5] Prow—profit. [6] No force—no matter. [7] Boist, (Fr. *boîte*)—box. [8] Mote I the—so may I prosper. [9] In term—according to rule. [10] Erme—grieve. [11] Cardiacle—a complaint of the heart. [12] But I have a triacle—unless I have a remedy. [13] Moist, (Lat. *mustus*)—new.

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* Alluding to the Doctor's Tale of Virginius, and the unjust judge Appius; which I have omitted, because it is neither remarkably well told, nor is it historically accurate.

My heart is lost for pity of this maid. 30
Thou *bel amy*, thou Pardoner, he said,
Tell us some mirth of japés[1] right anon."
"It shall be done, quod he, by Saint Ronion.
But first, quod he, here at this alé-stake[2]
I will both drink and biten on a cake." 35
But right anon these gentles 'gan to cry;
"Nay let him tell us of no ribaldry:
Tell us some moral thing, that we may lere[3]
Some wit, and thenné will we gladly hear."
"I grant ywis, quod he; but I must think 40
Upon some honest thing while that I drink."

[1] Japes—jokes. [2] Ale-stake—an alehouse sign. [3] Lere—learn.

"Now, Sirs, quod he, if it be you so lief
To finden Death, turn up this crooked way;
For in that grove I left him."—l. 465.

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

LORDINGS, quod he, in churché when I preach
I pained me to have a hautein[1] speech,
And ring it out as round as go'th a bell,
For I can all[2] by roté that I tell. 45
My theme is always one, and ever was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
First I pronouncé whennés that I come,
And then my bullés show I, all and some:
Our liegé lordés seal on my patent 50
That show I first, my body to warrant,
That no man be so bold, ne priest ne clerk,
Me to disturb of Christés holy work:
And after that then tell I forth my tales.
Bullés of popés and of cardinales, 55
Of patriarchs and bíshopés, I show,
And in Latín I speak a wordés few

[1] Hautein—loud, lofty. [2] Can all—know all.

The Pardoner's Tale.] A company of rioters conspire to kill Death, who killeth them one after another.—*Speght.*

To saffron with my predicatión,
And for to steer men to devotión:
Then show I forth my longé cristal stones, 60
Ycramméd full of cloutés and of bones;
Relics they be, as weenen[1] they each one.
Then have I in laton[2] a shoulder bone
Which that was of a holy Jewés sheep.
"Good men, say I, take of my wordés keep:[3] 65
If that this bone be wash'd in any well;
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxé, swell
That any worm hath eat, or worm ystung,
Take water of that well and wash his tongue,
And it is whole anon: and farthermore, 70
Of pockés and of scab, and every sore,
Shall every sheep be whole that of this well
Drinketh a draught: take keep of that I tell.
"If that the good man that the beastés oweth[4]
Will every week, ere that the cock him croweth, 75
Fasting ydrinken of this well a draught,
As thilké holy Jew our elders taught,
His beastés and his store shall multiply:
And, Sirs, also it healeth jealousy;
For though a man be fall in jealous rage, 80
Let maken with this water his potáge,
And never shall he more his wife mistrist,
Though he the soth of her defaulté wist,
Al'[5] had she taken priestes two or three.
"Here is a mittain[6] eke that ye may see: 85
He that his hand will put in this mittain
He shall have multiplying of his grain,
When he hath sowen, be it wheat or oats;
So that he offer pence or ellés groats.
"And men and women, one thing warn I you; 90
If any wight be in this churché now
That hath done sin horríble, so that he
Dare not for shame of it yshriven be;

* * * * *

Such folk shall have no power ne no grace
To offer to my relics in this place: 95
And who so find'th him out of suché blame
He will come up and offer' in Goddés name,

[1] Weenen—think, believe. [2] Laton—mixed metal, brass. [3] Take keep—take care, or thought. [4] Oweth—owneth. [5] Al'—although. [6] Mittain—glove.

V. 58. *To saffron, &c.*] A metaphorical term. Saffron was much used in culinary preparations to give colour as well as flavour, and it was thought to produce an agreeable effect upon the animal spirits.

And I assoil him by the authority
Which that by bull ygranted was to me."
By this gaudé have I wonnen year by year 100
A hundred marks since I was Pardoner.
I standé like a clerk in my pulpet,
And when the lewéd[1] people' is down yset
I preaché so as ye have heard before,
And tell a hundred falsé japés[2] more : 105
Then pain I me to stretchen forth my neck,
And east and west upon the people' I beck,
As doth a dové sitting upon a barn :
My handés and my tongué gone so yern,[3]
That it is joy to see my business. 110
Of avarice and of suché cursedness
Is all my preaching, for to make them free
To give their pence, and namely,—unto me ;
For mine intent is naught but for to win,
And nothing for correctión of sin: 115
I recké never when that they be buried
Though that their soulés gone a blacké buried.[4]
For certés many a predicatión
Cometh oft time of evil intentión ;
Some for pleasánce of folk and flattery, 120
To be advancéd by hypocrisy ;
And some for vainé glory', and some for hate:
For when I dare no other ways debate,
Then will I sting him with my tongué smart
In preaching, so that he shall not astart 125
To be defaméd falsély, if that he
Hath trespass'd to my brethren or to me :
For though I tellé not his proper name,
Men shall well knowen that it is the same
By signés, and by other circumstances. 130
Thus quit I folk that do us díspleasánces,
Thus spit I out my venom under hue
Of holiness, to seemé holy' and true.
But shortly mine intent I will devise;
I preach of nothing but for covetise, 135
Therefore my theme is yet, and ever was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
Thus can I preach against the samé vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be guilty in that sin, 140
Yet can I maken other folk to twin[5]

[1] Lewed—ignorant. [2] Japes—jests, tricks. [3] Yern—briskly. [4] Black buried : the commentators are at a loss to explain the meaning of this phrase ; it is undoubtedly more easy of conjecture than of definition. [5] Twin—turn.

From avarice, and sore them to repent;
But that is not my principal intent:
I preaché nothing but for covetise.
Of this mattére it ought enough suffice. 145
Then tell I them examples many one
Of oldé stories longé time agone,
For lewéd[1] people loven talés old;
Such thingés can they well report and hold.
What? trowen ye that whilés I may preach 150
And winnen gold and silver for I teach,
That I will live in povert' wilfully?
Nay, nay; I thought it never truély:
For I will preach and beg in sundry lands,
I will not do no labour with mine hands, 155
Nor make baskettés for to live thereby,
Because I will not beggen idlely.
I will none of the apostles counterfeit;
I will have money, woollé, cheese, and wheat,
Al'[2] were it given of the poorest page, 160
Or of the poorest widow' in a villáge,
Al'[2] should her children starven for famíne:
Nay, I will drink the liquor of the vine.

* * * * *

But hearkeneth, Lordings, in conclusión,
Your liking is that I shall tell a Tale. 165
Now I have drunk a draught of corny ale,
By God I hope I shall you tell a thing
That shall by reason be at your liking;
For though myself be a full vicious man,
A moral Tale yet I you tellen can, 170
Which I am wont to preachen for to win.
Now hold your peace, my Tale I will begin.
In Flanders whilom was a company
Of youngé folk that haunteden follý,
As hazard, riot, stewés, and tavérns, 175
Whereas with harpés, lutés, and gitterns,[3]
They dance and play at dice both day and night,
And eat also and drinké o'er their might,
Through which they do the devil sacrifice,
Within the devil's temple', in curséd wise, 180
By superfluity abominável.
Their oathes been so great and so damnáble
That it is grisly[4] for to hear them swear.
Our blissful Lordés body they to-tear;
Them thought the Jewés rent him not enough; 185
And each of them at other's sinné laugh.

[1] Lewed—ignorant. [2] Al'—although. [3] Gitterns—guitars. [4] Grisly—dreadful.

And right anon in comen tombesteres,[1]
Fetis[2] and small, and youngé fruitesteres,[3]
Singers with harpés, baudés,[4] waferers,[5]
Which be the very devil's officers, 190
To kindle and blow the fire of 'luxury,'
That is annexéd unto gluttony.
The holy writ take I to my witness
That luxury' is in wine and drunkenness.
Lo, how that drunken Lot unkindély[6] 195
Lay by his daughters two, unweetingly;
So drunk he was he n'isté what he wrought.
Herodés, who so well the stories sought,
When he of wine replete was at his feast,
Right at his owen table' he gave his hest[7] 200
To slay the Baptist John full guiltéless.
Seneca saith a good word doubtéless;
He saith he can no differencé find
Betwixt a man that is out of his mind
And a man whiché that is drunkelew;[8] 205
But that woodness,[9] yfallen in a shrew,
Persevéreth longer than doth drunkenness.
O gluttony! full of cursedness,
O causé first of our confusión!
O original of our damnatión! 210
Till Christ had bought us with his blood again:
Looketh how dearé, shortly for to sain,
Abought[10] was thilké[11] curséd villainy:
Corrupt was all this world for gluttony.
Adam our father, and his wife also, 215
From Paradise to labour and to woe
Were driven for that vice, it is no drede;[12]
For while that Adam fasted, as I read,
He was in Paradise, and when that he
Ate of the fruit defended,[13] on a tree, 220
Anon he was out cast to woe and pain.
O gluttony! on thee well ought us plain.
O! wist a man how many maladies
Follow' of excessé and of gluttonies,
He wouldé be the moré measurável 225
Of his diete, sitting at his table.
Alas! the shorté throat, the tender mouth,
Maketh that east and west, and north and south,

[1] Tombesteres—female dancers. [2] Fetis—well made, neat. [3] Fruitesteres—female fruitsellers. [4] Baudes—mirthful, joyous. [5] Waferers — sellers of wafer-cakes. [6] Unkindely—unnaturally. [7] Hest—command. [8] Drunkelew—given to drinking. [9] Woodness—madness. [10] Abought—purchased. [11] Thilke—this same. [12] Drede—doubt. [13] Defended (Fr. *defendu*)—forbidden.

In earth, in air, in water, men to swink[1]
To get a glutton dainty meat and drink. 230
Of this mattere, O Paul! well canst thou treat:
Meat unto womb,[2] and womb eke unto meat,
Shall God destroyen both, as Paulus saith.
Alas! a foul thing is it by my faith,
To say this word, and fouler is the deed, 235
When man so drinketh of the white and rede.

* * * * *

The apostle saith, weeping full piteously,
There walken many' of which you told have I;
I say it now weeping with piteous voice
That they be enemies of Christés cross, 240
Of which the end is death; womb is their God.

* * * * *

How great labóur and cost is thee to find![3]
These cookés how they stamp, and strain, and grind,
And turnen substance into accident,
To fúlfil all thy likerous talent! 245
Out of the hardy bonés knocken they
The marrow, for they casten naught away
That may go through the gullet soft and sote:[4]
Of spicery, of leaf, of bark, and root,
Shall be his sauce ymakéd, by delight 250
To make him yet a newer appetite:
But certés he that haunteth such delicés
Is dead while that he liveth in those vices.
A 'likerous' thing is wine, and drunkenness
Is full of striving and of wretchedness. 255
O drunken man! disfigur'd is thy face,
Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace;
And through thy drunken nose seemeth the soun
As though thou saidést aye "Sampsoun! Sampsoun!"
And yet, Got wot, Sampsoun drunk ne'er no wine: 260
Thou fallest as it were a stickéd swine;
Thy tongue is lost, and all thine honest cure,[5]
For drunkenness is very sépulture
Of mannes wit and his discretión.
In whom that drink hath dominatión 265
He can no counsel keep, it is no drede.[6]
Now keep you from the white and from the rede,[7]
And namely from the whité wine of Lepe,[8]
That is to sell in Fish-street and in Cheap.

[1] Swink—labour. [2] Womb—belly. [3] Thee to find—to supply thee (meaning the belly). [4] Sote—sweet. [5] Cure—care. [6] Drede—doubt. [7] Rede—red. [8] Lepe—*see note below.*

V. 268. *the white wine of Lepe.*] According to the geographers,

This wine of Spain creepeth subtlely 270
In other winés growing fasté by,
Of which there riseth such fumosity,[1]
That when a man hath drunken draughtés three,
And weeneth[2] that he be at home in Cheap,
He is in Spain, right at the town of Lepe, 275
Not at the Róchelle, or at Bourdeaux town,
And thenné will he say "Sampsoun! Sampsoun!"
But hearkeneth, Lordings, one word, I you pray,
That all the sovereign actés, dare I say,
Of victories in the Oldé Testament, 280
Through very God that is omnipotent,
Were done in abstinence and in prayére;
Looketh the Bible, and there ye may it lere.[3]
Look, Attila the greaté conqueror
Died in his sleep with shame and dishonóur, 285
Bleeding aye at his nose in drunkenness:
A capitain should live in soberness.
And o'er all this aviseth[4] you right well
What was commanded unto Lemuel;
Not Samuel, but Lemuel, say I. 290
Readeth the Bible, and find it expressly
Of wine giving to them that have justíce.
No more of this, for it may well suffice.
And now that I have spoke of gluttony,
Now will I you defenden[5] hazardry.[6] 295
Hazard is very mother of léasings,
And of deceits and curséd forswearings,
Blaspheming of Christ, manslaughter', and waste also
Of cattle, and of time; and farthermo
It is reproof, and contrary' of honóur 300
For to be held a common hazardour,[6]
And ever the higher he is of estate
The moré he is holden desolate.
If that a princé useth hazardry,
In allé governance and policy 305
He is, as by common opinión,
Yhold the less in reputatión.
Stilbon, that was a wise ambassador,
Was sent to Corinth with full great honóur
From Calidone, to maken them alliance; 310
And when he came, he happened him *par chance*,

[1] Fumosity—fumes from drinking. [2] Weeneth—thinketh, imagineth. [3] Lere—learn. [4] Aviseth—consider. [5] Defenden—forbid. [6] Hazardry—gaming.

Lepe was not far from Cadiz. This wine, of whatever sort it may have been, was probably much stronger than the Gascon wines usually drunk in England.—*Tyr.*

That all the greatest that were of that lond
Yplaying atté hazard[1] he them fond;
For which, as soon as that it mighté be,
He stole him home again to his countrý, 315
And saidé; "There I will not lose my name,
Ne will not take on me so great defame,
You for to' ally unto none hazardours:
Sendeth some other wise ambassadors,
For by my truthé me were lever[2] die 320
Than I you should to hazardours ally;
For ye, that been so glorious in honóurs,
Shall not ally you to none hazardours,
As by my will, nor as by my treaty."
This wisé philosópher thus said he. 325
Look eke how to the King Demetrius
The King of Parthes, as the book saith us,
Sent him a pair of dice of gold in scorn,
For[3] he had uséd hazard therebeforn,
For which he held his glory' and his renown 330
At no valúe or reputatióun.
Lordés may finden other manner play
Honést enough to drive the day away.
Now will I speak of oathés false and great
A word or two, as oldé bookés treat. 335
Great swearing is a thing abominable,
And false swearing is yet more reprovable.
The highé God forbade swearing at all,
Witness on Mathew; but in special
Of swearing saith the holy Jeremie, 340
Thou shalt swear soth[4] thine oathés, and not lie,
And swear in doom,[5] and eke in righteousness,
But idle swearing is a cursedness.
Behold and see that in the firsté table
Of highé Goddés hestés[6] honouráble 345
How that the second hest of him is this,
Take not my name in idle[7] or amiss.
Lo, rather he forbiddeth such swearing,
Than homicide or many' an other thing.
I say that as by order thus it standeth, 350
This know'th he that his hestés understandeth,
How that the second hest of God is that:
And farthermore, I will thee tell all plat,[8]
That vengeance shall not parten from his house
That of his oathes is outrageóus. 355

[1] Hazard—gaming. [2] Lever—rather. [3] For—because. [4] Soth—true. [5] Doom—judgment. [6] Hestes—commandments. [7] In idle—in vain. [8] Plat—plainly.

By Goddés precious heart, and by his nails,
And by the blood of Christ that is in Hailes,
Seven is my chance, and thine is cinque and trey:
By Goddés armés if thou falsely play,
This dagger shall throughout thine hearté go. 360
This fruit com'th of the bicchel bonés two,
Forswearing, ire, falseness, and homicide.
Now for the love of Christ, that for us died,
Letteth[1] your oathés bothé great and smale.
But, Sirs, now will I tell you forth my Tale. 365
These riotourés three of which I tell,
Long erst[2] ere primé rung of any bell,
Were set them in a tavern for to drink,
And as they sat they heard a bellé clink
Before a corpse was carried to his grave; 370
That one of them 'gan callen to his knave;[3]
"Go bet,[4] quod he, and aské readily
What corpse is this that passeth here forth by,
And look that thou report his namé well."
"Sir, quod this boy, it needeth never a deal;[5] 375
It was me told ere ye came here two hours;
He was pardé an old felláw of yours,
And suddenly he was yslain to-night,
Fordrunk as he sat on his bench upright;
There came a privy thief men clepen Death, 380
That in this country all the people slay'th,
And with his spear he smote his heart atwo,
And went his way withouten wordés mo.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence;
And, master, ere ye come in his presénce, 385
Me thinketh that it were full necessary
For to beware of such an adversary:
Be ready for to meet him evermore;
Thus taughté me my dame; I say no more."
"By Sainté Mary, said this tavernere, 39[illegible]
The child saith soth,[6] for he hath slain this year,

[1] Letteth—quit. [2] Erst—before. [3] Knave—servant lad. [4] G[illegible] bet—better go. [5] Never a deal—not a whit. [6] Soth—truth.

V. 357. *the blood—in Hailes.*] The Abbey of *Hailes* in Glouc[illegible]tershire was founded by Richard King of the Romans, brother Henry III. This precious relic, which was afterwards commo[illegible] called "the blood of *Hailes*," was brought out of Germany by [illegible] son of Richard, Edmund, who bestowed a third part of it upon [illegible] father's Abbey of *Hailes*, and some time after gave the other [illegible] parts to an abbey of his own foundation at Ashrug, near B[illegible]hamsted. *Hollingsh.* v. ii. p. 275.—*Tyr.*

V. 361. *bicchel bones.*] Implements used in a game of hazard [illegible] all probability similar to our dice. See note upon this passage [illegible] Tyrwhitt's edit.

Hence over a mile, within a great villáge,
Both man and woman, child, and hind and page;
I trow his habitatión be there:
To be aviséd[1] great wisdóm it were 395
Ere that he did a man a dishonóur."
"Yea, Goddés armés, quod this rioter,
Is it such peril with him for to meet?
I shall him seek by stile and eke by street,
I make a vow by Goddés digné[2] bones. 400
Hearkeneth, fellaws, we three been allé ones;[3]
Let each of us hold up his hand to other,
And each of us becomen other's brother,
And we will slay this falsé traitour Death:
He shall be slain, he that so many slay'th, 405
By Goddés dignity, ere it be night."
Together have these three their truthés plight
To live and dien each of them for other,
As though he were his owen boren[4] brother.
And up they start all drunken in this rage, 410
And forth they gone towardés that villáge
Of which the taverner had spoke beforn,
And many a grisly[5] oath then have they sworn,
And Christés blessed body they to-rent,[6]
"Death shall be dead, if that we may him hent."[7] 415
When they had gone not fully half a mile,
Right as they would have trodden o'er a stile,
An old man and a pooré with them met:
This oldé man full meekely them gret,[8]
And saidé thus; "Now, Lordés, God you see!"[9] 420
The proudest of these riotourés three
Answér'd again; "What? churl, with sorry grace,
Why art thou all forwrappéd save thy face?
Why livest thou so long in so great age?"
This oldé man 'gan look in his viságe, 425
And saidé thus; "For I ne cannot find
A man, though that I walkéd into Ind,
Neither in city nor in no villáge,
That wouldé change his youthé for mine age;
And therefore must I have mine agé still 430
As longé time as it is Goddés will.
Ne Death, alas! ne will not have my life:
Thus walk I, like a restéless caitiff,[10]
And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
I knocké with my staff earlý and late, 435

[1] Avised—watchful, prepared. [2] Digne—honourable. [3] Alle ones—all one, or, in unity. [4] Boren—born. [5] Grisly—fearful. [6] To-rent—defaced. [7] Hent—caught. [8] Gret—greeted. [9] See—*i.e.* "God preserve you in his sight." [10] Caitiff—wretch.

And say to her, Levé[1] mother, let me in.
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin.
Alas! when shall my bonés be at rest?
Mother, with you would I change my chest,
That in my chamber longé time hath be, 440
Yea, for an hairy clout to wrap in me.'
But yet to me she will not do that grace,
For which full pale and welked[2] is my face.
"But, Sirs, to you it is no courtesy
To speak unto an old man villainy, 445
But he[3] trespáss in word or else in deed.
In holy writ ye may yourselven read;
'Against an old man, hoar upon his hede,
Ye should arise:' therefore I give you rede[4]
Ne do'th unto an old man none harm now, 450
No more than that ye would a man did you
In age, if that ye may so long abide;
And God be with you whe'r[5] ye go or ride:
I must go thither as I have to go."
"Nay, oldé churl, by God thou shalt not so," 455
Saidé this other hazardour[6] anon;
"Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.
Thou spake right now of thilké[7] traitour Death,
That in this country all our friendés slay'th;
Have here my truth, as thou art his espy, 460
Tell where he is, or thou shalt it aby[8]
By God and by the holy sacrament,
For sothly thou art one of his assent
To slay us youngé folk, thou falsé thief."
"Now, Sirs, quod he, if it be you so lief[9] 465
To finden Death, turn up this crooked way;
For in that grove I left him, by my fay
Under a tree, and there he will abide,
Nor for your boast he will him nothing hide.
See ye that oak? right there ye shall him find. 470
God savé you that bought again mankind,
And you amend!" Thus said this oldé man.
And evereach of these riotourés ran
Till they came to the tree, and there they found
Of florins fine of gold ycoinéd round 475
Well nigh an eighté bushels, as them thought:
No longer then after Death they sought,
But each of them so glad was of the sight,
For that the florins been so fair and bright,

[1] Leve—dear. [2] Welked—wrinkled. [3] But he—unless he, &c.
[4] Rede — advice. [5] Whe'r — whether. [6] Hazardour — gamester.
[7] Thilke—this same. [8] Aby—suffer for. [9] Lief—pleasant.

That down they set them by the precious hoard : 480
The worst of them he spake the firsté word.
" Brethren, quod he, take keep what I shall say ;
My wit is great, though that I bourde[1] and play.
This treasure hath Fortúne unto us given,
In mirth and jollity our life to liven, 485
And lightly as it com'th so will we spend.
Ey ![2] Goddés precious dignity ! who ween'd[3]
To-day that we should have so fair a grace ?
But might this gold be carried from this place
Home to my house, or ellés unto yours, 490
(For well I wot that all this gold is ours)
Thenné were we in high felicity ;
But truély by day it may not be ;—
Men woulden say that we were thievés strong,
And for our owen treasure done us hong.[4] 495
This treasure must ycarried be by night
As wisely and as slyly as it might ;
Wherefore I rede[5] that cut[6] among us all
We draw, and let see where the cut will fall ;
And he that hath the cut, with hearté blithe, 500
Shall runnen to the town, and that full swith,[7]
And bring us bread and wine full privily ;
And two of us shall keepen subtlely
This treasure well ; and if he will not tarrien,
When it is night we will this treasure carrien 505
By one assent where as us thinketh best."
That one of them the cut brought in his fist,
And bade them draw, and look where it would fall,
And it fell on the youngest of them all ;
And forth towárd the town he went anon : 510
And all so soon as that he was agone,
That one of them spake thus unto that other ;
" Thou wottest well thou art my sworen brother,
Thy profit will I tell thee right anon.
Thou wott'st well that our fellow is agone ; 515
And here is gold, and that full great plenty,
That shall departed be among us three ;
But nathéless, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not done a friendés turn to thee ?" 520
That other answer'd ; " I n'ot[8] how that may be :
He wot well that the gold is with us tway.
What shall we do ? what shall we to him say ?"

[1] Bourde—joke. [2] Ey !—an interjection. [3] Ween'd—guessed. [4] Done us hong—have us hanged. [5] Rede—advise. [6] Cut—lot. [7] Swith—quickly. [8] N'ot—know not.

"Shall it be counsel? said the firsté shrew,[1]
And I shall tellen thee in wordés few 525
What we shall do, and bring it well about."
"I granté, quod that other, out of doubt,
That by my truth I will thee not betray."
"Now, quod the first, thou wott'st well we be tway;
And tway of us shall stronger be than one. 530
Look, when that he is set, thou right anon
Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play,
And I shall rive him through the sidés tway
While that thou strugglest with him as in game;
And with thy dagger look thou do the same; 535
And then shall all this gold departed be,
My dearé friend! betwixen thee and me;
Then may we both our lustés all fulfil,
And play at dice right at our owen will."
And thus accorded been these shrewés[1] tway 540
To slay the third as ye have heard me say.
This youngest, which that wenté to the town,
Full oft in heart he rolleth up and down
The beauty of these florins new and bright.
"O Lord! quod he, if so were, that I might 545
Have all this treasure to myself alone,
There is no man that liv'th undér the throne
Of God that shouldé live so merry' as I."
And at the last, the fiend, our enemy,
Put in his thought that he should poison buy, 550
With which he mighté slay his fellows tway:
For why? the fiend found him in such living,
That he had leve[2] to sorrow him to bring;
For this was utterly his full intent,
To slay thém both and never to repent. 555
And forth he go'th, no longer would he tarry,
Into the town unto a 'pothecary,
And prayéd him that he him wouldé sell
Some poison, that he might his ratouns[3] quell;
And eke there was a polecat in his haw[4] 560
That, as he said, his capons had yslaw;[5]
And fain he would him wreaken,[6] if he might,
Of vermin that destroyéd them by night.
The 'pothecary answer'd; "Thou shalt have
A thing, as wisly[7] God my soulé save, 565
In all this world there n'is no creáture
That eat or drunk hath of this cónfecture,

[1] Shrew—a cursed man. [2] Leve—inclination. [3] Ratouns—rats. [4] Haw—farm yard. [5] Yslaw—slain. [6] Him wreaken if he might—revenge himself if he could. [7] Wisly—certainly.

Not but the mountance [1] of a corn of wheat,
That he ne shall his life anon forlet,[2]
Yea, starve [3] he shall, and that in lessé while 570
Than thou wilt go a pace not but a mile;
This poison is so strong and violent.'
  This curséd man hath in his hand yhent [4]
This poison in a box, and swith [5] he ran
Into the nexté street unto a man, 575
And borrowed of him largé bottles three,
And in the two the poison pouréd he :
The third he kepté cleané for his drink,
For all the night he shope him for to swink [6]
In carrying of the gold out of that place. 580
  And when this rioter with sorry grace [7]
Hath fill'd with wine his greaté bottles three,
To his fellows again repaireth he.
  What needeth it thereof to sermon more?
For right as they had cast his death before, 585
Right so they have him slain, and that anon.
And when that this was done thus spake that one;
" Now let us sit and drink, and make us merry,
And afterward we will his body bury."
And with that word it happen'd him *par cas* [8] 590
To take the bottle where the poison was,
And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,
For which anon they storven [9] bothé two.
  But certés I suppose that Avicenne
Wrote never in no canon ne' in no fenne [10] 595
More wonder signés of empoisoning
Than had these wretches two, or their ending.
Thus ended been these homicidés two,
And eke the false empoisoner also.

* * * *

[1] Mountance—amounting. Forlet—give over. [3] Starve—die. [4] Yhent—taken. [5] Swith—immediately. [6] Swink—labour, work. [7] Sorry grace — evil, or misfortune. [8] *Par cas* — by accident. [9] Storven, (perfect tense of sterve)—died. [10] Fenne—the title of one of the sections in Avicenne's great work, entitled *Canun*.

THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE.

"WELL said, by *corpus Domini*, quod our Host;
* * * *
But now pass o'er and let us seek about
Who shall now tellen first of all this rout
Another Tale:" and with that word he said,
As courteously as it had been a maid; 5
"My Lady Prioressé, by your leave,
So that I wist[1] I should you not aggrieve,
I wouldé deemen that ye tellen should
A Talé next, if so were that ye would.
Now will ye vouchésafe, my Lady dear?" 10
"Gladly," quod she; and said as ye shall hear.

[1] Wist—know.

"This abbot, which that was a holy man,
* * * *
This youngé child to conjure he began,
And saide :—O dearé child! - - -
Tell me what is thy causé for to sing,
Since that thy throat is cut, to my seeming."—l. 201.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

O LORD our Lord! thy name how marvellous
Is in this largé world yspread! (quod she)
For not all only thy laudé[1] precióus
Performéd is by men of dignity, 15
But by the mouth of children thy bounty
Performéd is; for on the breast sucking,
Sometimé showen they thine herying,[2]
Wherefore in laud, as I can best and may,
Of thee and of the whité lily flow'r 20
Which that thee bare, and is a maid alway,
To tell a story' I will do my labóur;
Not that I may encreasen her honóur,

[1] Laud—praise. [2] Herying—praise.

The Prioress's Tale.] A miracle of a Christian child murdered by the Jews.—*Urry.*

For she herselven is honour and root
Of bounty, next her son, and soulés boot.[1] 25
O mother maid! O maid and mother free![2]
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight,
That ravishedst down from the deity,
Through thine humbléss, the ghost that in thee' alight,
Of whose virtúe, when he thine hearté light',[3] 30
Conceivéd was the father's sapience,
Help me to tell it in thy reverence.
Lady! thy bounty, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue and thy great humility,
There may no tongue express in no science; 35
For sometime, Lady! ere men pray to thee,
Thou go'st before of thy benignity,
And gettest us the light of thy prayére
To guiden us unto thy son so dear.
My cunning[4] is so weak, O blissful Queen! 40
For to declare thy greaté worthiness,
That I ne may the weighté not sustene;
But as a child of twelve months old or less,
That can unnethés[5] any word express,
Right so fare I, and therefore I you pray, 45
Guideth my song that I shall of you say.
There was in Asia, in a great city,
Amongés Christian folk a Jewéry,[6]
Sustainéd by a lord of that country,
For foul usure and lucre' of villainy, 50
Hateful to Christ and to his company,
And through the street men mighten ride and wend,[7]
For it was free, and open at either end.
A little school of Christian folk there stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were 55
Children a heapé comen of Christian blood,
That learnéd in that schoolé year by year
Such manner doctrine as men usédthere;
This is to say, to singen and to read,
As smallé children do in their childhede. 60
Among these children was a widow's son,
A little clergion,[8] seven years of age,
That day by day to schoolé was his won;[9]

[1] Boot—help. [2] Free—bountiful. [3] Light—(for) lighted, made pleasant. So in *Troilus*, b. iii. l. 1083:—

"For wroth is she that should his sorrows *light*."

[4] Cunning—skill, knowledge. [5] Unnethes—scarcely. [6] Jewery—that quarter of a city in which the Jews were compelled to reside; —generally the suburbs. [7] Wend—go, walk. [8] Clergion—young clerk. [9] Won—custom.

And eke also, whereas he saw th' imáge
Of Christés mother, had he in uságe, 65
As him was taught, to kneel adown, and say
Ave María as he go'th by the way.
Thus hath this widow her little son ytaught
Our blissful Lady, Christés mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgot it naught; 70
For sely[1] childé will alway soon lere.[2]
But aye when I remember on this mattére,
Saint Nicholas stant[3] ever in my presénce,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.
This little child his little book learning, 75
As he sat in the school at his primére,
He *Alma Redemptoris* heardé sing,
As children learnéd their antiphonere,[4]
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened aye the wordés and the note, 80
Till he the firsté verse could all by rote.
Naught wist[5] he what this Latin was to say,
For he so young and tender was of age;
But on a day his fellow 'gan he pray
T' expounden him this song in his languáge, 85
Or tell him why this song was in uságe:
This pray'd he him to construe and declare
Full often time upon his kneés bare.
His fellow, which that elder was than he,
Answer'd him thus; "This song, I have heard say,
Was makéd of our blissful Lady free,[6] 91
Her to salue,[7] and eke her for to pray
To be our help and succour when we dey.[8]
I can no more expound in this mattére:
I learné song; I can[9] but small grammére." 95
"And is this song makéd in reverence
Of Christés mother? said this innocent:
Now certés I will do my diligence
To conn[10] it all ere Christémas be went,
Though that I for my primer shall be shent,[11] 100

[1] Sely — simple, innocent. [2] Lere — learn. [3] Stant — standeth. [4] Antiphonere—antiphones, or chaunting alternate verses of the Psalms. [5] Wist — knew. [6] Free — bountiful. [7] Salue — praise. [8] Dey—die. [9] Can—know. [10] Conn—know, learn. [11] Be shent—be scolded, punished: the strict meaning of shend is, to ruin.

V. 73. *Saint Nicholas.*] The patron saint of children. We have an account of the very early piety of this saint in his lesson, *Brev. Roman.* vi. *Decemb.*; viz. that while at his mother's breast he sucked but once on the Wednesdays and Fridays (the days of fast), and then only in the evening.

And shall be beaten thriés in an hour,
I will it conn [1] our Lady for t' honóur."
His fellow taught him homeward privily
From day to day till he could it by rote,
And then he sang it well and boldély 105
From word to word according with the note:
Twiés a day it passéd through his throat,
To schoolward and homeward when he went;
On Christés mother set was his intent.
As I have said, throughout the Jewéry 110
This little child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry
O Alma Redemptoris! ever mo.
The sweetness hath his hearté piercéd so
Of Christés mother, that to her to pray 115
He cannot stint [2] of singing by the way.
Our firsté foe, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewés heart his waspés nest,
Up swell'd and said; "O Ebraike people', alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honést, 120
That such a boy shall walken as him lest
In your despite, and sing of such senténce,
Which is against our lawés reverence?"
From thennésforth the Jewés have conspiréd
This innocent out of this world to chase: 125
A homicidé thereto have they hiréd,
That in an alley had a private place,
And as the child 'gan forthby for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hent [3] and held him fast,
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast. 130
I say that in a wardrope [4] they him threw
Where as these Jewés 'casten their offále.'
O curséd folk! of Herodés all-new,[5]
What may your evil intenté you avail?
Murder will out, certáin it will not fail; 135
And namely there [6] th' honóur of God shall spread
The blood out crieth on your curséd deed.
O martyr souded [7] in virginity!
Now may'st thou sing and follow e'er in one [8]
The whité Lamb celestial, quod she, 140
Of which the great evangelist Saint John
In Patmos wrote, which saith that they that gone
Before this Lamb, and sing a song all new,
That never fleshly woman they ne knew.

[1] Conn—know, learn. [2] Stint—cease. [3] Hent—caught, seized. [4] Wardrope—common sewer. [5] All-new—fresh: (as might be said) "Herodes redivivi." [6] There — where. [7] Souded — confirmed. [8] E'er in one—continually.

This pooré widow' awaiteth all that night 145
After her little child, and he came naught,
For which as soon as it was dayés light,
With facé pale of dread and busy thought
She hath at school and ellés where him sought,
Till finally she 'gan so far espy[1] 150
That he last seen was in the Jewéry.
With mother's pity in her breast encloséd
She go'th, as she were half out of her mind,
To every placé where she hath supposéd
By likelihood her little child to find; 155
And ever on Christés mother meek and kind
She cried, and at the lasté thus she wrought,
Among the cursed Jewés she him sought.
She freyneth[2] and she prayéth piteously
To every Jew that dwelt in thilké place 160
To tell her if her child went aught forth by;
They saiden Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Gave in her thought, within a little space,
That in that place after her son she cried,
There[3] he was casten in a pit beside. 165
O great God, that performest thy laud
By mouth of innocents, lo here thy might!
This gem of chastity, this emeraud,
And eke of martyrdom the ruby bright,
There he with throat ycorven[4] lay upright, 170
He *Alma Redemptoris* 'gan to sing
So loud, that all the placé 'gan to ring.
The Christian folk that through the streeté went
In comen for to wonder' upon this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sent: 175
He came anon withouten tarrying,
And herieth[5] Christ, that is of heaven king,
And eke his mother, honour of mankind,
And after that, the Jewés let he bind.
This child with piteous lamentatión 180
Was taken up, singing his song alway,
And with honóur and great procession
They carrien him unto the next abbéy;
His mother swooning by the bieré lay:
Unnethés might[6] the people that was there 185
This newé Rachel bringen from his bier.
With torment and with shameful death each one
This provost doth these Jewés for to starve[7]

[1] Espy—discover. [2] Freyneth—asketh. [3] There—where. [4] Ycorven—cut. [5] Herieth—praiseth. [6] Unnethes might—scarcely were the people able. [7] Starve—die.

That of this murder wist,[1] and that anon :
He n'oldé [2] no such cursedness observe :[3] 190
Evil shall he have that evil will deserve ;
Therefore with wildé horse he did them draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.
Upon his bier aye li'th this innocent
Before the altar while the massé last, 195
And after that, th' abbót with his convént
Have sped them for to bury him full fast ;
And when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this child, when sprent[4] was th' holy water,
And sang *O Alma Redemptoris Mater !* 200
This abbot, which that was a holy man,
As monkés be, or ellés ought to be,
This youngé child to cónjure he began,
And said ; " O dearé child ! I halsé[5] thee, 205
In virtue of the holy trinity,
Tell me what is thy causé for to sing,
Since that thy throat is cut, to my seeming."
" My throat is cut unto my necké bone,
Saidé this child, and as by way of kind[6] 210
I should have died, yea longé time agone,
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bookés find,
Will that his glory last and be in mind,
And for the worship of his mother dear,
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clear. 215
" This well[7] of mercy, Christés mother sweet,
I lovéd alway, as after my conning ;[8]
And when that I my lifé should forlete[9]
To me she came, and bade me for to sing
This anthem verily in my dying, 220
As ye have heard ; and when that I had sung,
Me thought she laid a grain upon my tongue.
" Wherefore I sing, and sing I must certáin,
In honour of that blissful maiden free,[10]
Till from my tongue off taken is the grain. 225
And after that thus saidé she to me ;
'My little child, then will I fetchen thee,
When that the grain is from thy tongue ytake :
Be not aghast, I will thee not forsake.'"
This holy monk, this abbot him mean I, 230
His tongue out caught, and took away the grain,

[1] Wist—knew. [2] N'olde—would not. [3] Observe—pay respect, attend to. [4] Sprent — sprinkled. [5] Halse — implore, conjure: literally "embrace round the neck ;" from the Sax. *hals*—neck. [6] By way of kind—in the course of nature. [7] Well—spring, fountain. [8] Conning—knowledge, ability. [9] Forlete—forsake. [10] Free —bountiful.

And he gave up the ghost full softily.
And when this abbot had this wonder seen,
His salté tearés trill'd adown as rain,
And groff[1] hė fell all plat upon the ground, 235
And still he lay as he had been ybound.
The convent lay eke on the pavément
Weeping and herying[2] Christés mother dear;
And after that they risen, and forth been went,
And took away this martyr from his bier, 240
And in a tomb of marble stonés clear
Enclosen they his little body sweet:
There[3] he is now God lene[4] us for to meet.
O youngé Hugh of Lincoln! slain also
With curséd Jewés, as it is notáble 245
For it is but a little while ago,
Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstáble,
That of his mercy God so merciáble
On us his greaté mercy multiply,
For reverence of his mother Mary. 250

[1] Groff—in itself means "flat on the ground."—*Gloss.* [2] Herying—praising. [3] There—where. [4] Lene—grant.

V. 244. *Hugh of Lincoln.*] The account of this murder is to be found in Matthew Paris. In the twenty-ninth year of the reign of Henry III., eighteen Jews were brought to London from Lincoln, and hanged for crucifying a child eight years old. In the *Acta Sanctorum* by Bollandus are the records of several infant martyrs who were canonised on account of their having been murdered by Jews.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S PROLOGUE.

THEN spake our Host with rudé speech and bold,
And said unto the Nunnés Priest anon,
" Come near, thou Priest, come hither, thou Sir John;
Tell us such thing as may our heartés glad:
Be blithe although thou ride upon a jade. 5
What though thine horse be bothé foul and lean?
If he will serve thee, reck thee not a bean:
Look that thy heart be merry evermo."
" Yea, Host, quod he, so may I ride or go,
But I be merry', ywis I will be blaméd." 10
And right anon his Tale he hath attaméd; [1]
And thus he said unto us evereach one,
This sweeté Priest, this goodly man, Sir John.

[1] Attamed, (Fr. *entamé*)—opened, commenced.

V. 3. *thou Sir John.*] I know not how it has happened that in the principal modern languages John (or its equivalent) is a name of contempt, or at least of slight. So the Italians use *Gianni*, from whence *Zani*, the Spaniards *Juan*, as *Bobo Juan*, a foolish John, the French *Jean*, with various additions, and in English when we call a man *a John* we do not mean it as a title of honour. Chaucer uses *Jacke Fool* as the Spaniards do *Bobo Juan*, and I suppose *Jack Ass* has the same etymology.—The title of *Sir* was usually given, by courtesy, to priests both secular and regular.—*Tyr.*

If the host then used the title *John* in an impertinent or contemptuous sense, that of *Sir* must also be understood as an additional piece of rudeness, because of its affectation of courtesy and respect. Shakspeare uses the epithet *Jack Priest.*

" This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes
Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close.
* * * *
And Dan Russéll the fox start up at once."—l. 484.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

A POORÉ widow, somedeal stoop'n in age,
Was whilom dwelling in a nar'w cottáge 15
Beside a grové standing in a dale.
This widow, which I tell you of my Tale,
Since thilké day that she was last a wife,
In patiénce led a full simple life,
For little was her cattle and her rent; 20
By husbandry [1] of such as God her sent,
She found herself and eke her daughters two.
Three largé sowés had she, and no mo,
Three kine, and eke a sheep that highté [2] Mall:
Full sooty was her bower and eke her hall, 25
In which she ate many' a slender meal:
Of poignant sauce ne knew she never a deal; [3]
No dainty morsel passéd through her throat;
Her diet was accordant to her cote: [4]
Repletión ne made her never sick; 30
Attemper [5] diet was all her physíc,

[1] Husbandry—thrift, economy. [2] Highte—called. [3] Never a deal—not at all. [4] Cote—cot, cottage. [5] Attemper—temperate.

The Nun's Priest's Tale. Of a cock and a hen; the moral whereof is to embrace true friends, and to beware of flatterers.—*Urry.*

And exercise, and heartés suffisance :
The gouté let[1] her nothing for to dance,
Ne apoplexy shenté[2] not her head;
No wine ne drank she neither white nor red : 35
Her board was servéd most with white and black,
Milk and brown bread, in which she found no lack,
Seindé[3] bacon, and sometime an egg or tway,
For she was as it were a manner dey.[4]
A yard she had enclosèd all about 40
With stickés, and a dry ditch without,
In which she had a cock hight[5] Chanticleer,
In all the land, of crowing n'as[6] his peer :
His voice was merrier than the merry' orgón
On massé days that in the churches gone : 45
Well sikerer[7] was his crowing in his lodge
Than is a clock or any abbey' orloge :[8]
By nature he knew each ascentión
Of th' equinoctial in thilké town,
For when degreés fifteen were ascended, 50
Then crew he that it might not be amended.
His comb was redder than the fine corál,
Embattelled as it were a castle wall;
His bill was black, and as the jet it shone,
Like azure were his leggés and his tone,[9] 55
His nailés whiter than the lily flower,
And like the burnéd[10] gold was his colóur.
This gentle cock had in his governance
Sev'n hennés for to do all his pleasánce;
Which were his sisters and his paramours, 60
And wonder like to him as of colóurs,
Of which the fairest huéd in the throat,
Was clepéd fair Damoiselle Partelote.
Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,
And cómpaignáble', and bare herself so fair, 65
Sithen the day that she was sevennight old,
That truély she hath the heart in hold
Of Chanticleer, lockéd in every lith;[11]
He lov'd her so, that well was him therewith :
But such a joy it was to hear them sing, 70
When that the brighté sun began to spring,

[1] Let—prevented. [2] Shent—injured. [3] Seinde—singed. [4] Dey—Mr. Tyrwhitt supposes the word "dey" to refer to the management of a dairy; and that it originally signified a hind. "Manner dey" may therefore be interpreted "a species of hired, or day-labourer." [5] Highte — called. [6] N'as — was not. [7] Sikerer — more certain. [8] Orloge—horologe, clock. [9] Tone—toes. [10] Burned—burnished. [11] Lith—limb.

In sweet accord; "My lefe [1] is far in land."
For thilké time, as I have understand,
Beastés and briddés coulden speak and sing.
And so befell that in a dawéning 75
As Chanticleer among his wivés all
Sat on his perché that was in the hall,
And next him sat his fairé Partelote,
This Chanticleer 'gan groanen in his throat
As man that in his dream is dretched [2] sore; 80
And when that Partelote thus heard him roar,
She was aghast, and saidé, "Hearté dear!
What aileth you to groan in this mannére?
Ye be a very sleeper, fy for shame!"
And he answér'd and saidé thus; "Madáme, 85
I pray you that ye take it not agrief;
By God me met [3] I was in such mischief
Right now, that yet mine heart is sore afright.
Now God (quod he) my sweven [4] reck aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisón. 90
"Me met [3] how thát I roaméd up and down
Within our yard, whereas I saw a beast
Was like a hound, and would have made arrest
Upon my body, and have had me dead:
His colour was betwixt yellów and red, 95
And tippéd was his tail and both his ears
With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs:
His snout was small, with glowing eyen tway;
Yet [5] for his look almost for fear I dey:
This causéd me my groaning doubtéless." 100
"Away, quod she, fy on you heartéless!
Alas! quod she, for by that God above
Now have ye lost my heart and all my love:
I cannot love a coward by my faith;
For certés, what so any woman saith, 105
We all desiren, if it mighté be,
To have a husband hardy, [6] wise, and free,
And secret, and no niggard nor no fool,
Nor him that is aghast of every tool,
Ne no avanter [7] by that God above. 110
How dursten ye for shame say to your love
That any thing might maken you afeard?
Have ye no mannés heart and have a beard?

[1] Lefe — love. [2] Dretched — oppressed. [3] Met — dreamed. [4] Sweven—dream. [5] Yet — still. [6] Hardy, (Fr. *hardie*)—bold, courageous. [7] Avanter—boaster.

V. 72. *My lefe, &c.*] This is, in all probability, a quotation from some ballad, well known at the time.

Alas! and can ye be aghast of swevenés?[1]
Nothing but vanity, God wot, in sweven is. 115
"Swevenes engendren of repletións,
And oft of fume, and of complexións,
When humours been too' abundant in a wight.
Certés this dream which ye have met to-night
Cometh of the great superfluity 120
Of youré reddé *cholera* pardé,
Which causeth folk to dreaden in their dreamés
Of arrows, and of fire with reddé lemés,[2]
Of reddé beastés that they will them bite,
Of conteke,[3] and of waspés great and lite,[4] 125
Right as the humour of meláncholy
Causeth full many a man in sleep to cry
For fear of bullés and of bearés black,
Or ellés that black devils will them take.
"Of other humours could I tell also, 130
That worken many a man in sleep much woe;
But I will pass as lightly as I can.
"Lo Cato, which that was so wise a man,
Said he not thus? 'Ne do no force[5] of dreams.'
"Now, Sir, quod she, when we fly from the beams,
For Goddés love as take some laxatif: 136
Up peril of my soul and of my life
I counsel you the best, I will not lie,
That both of choler' and of meláncholy
Ye 'clean' you; and for[6] ye should not tarry, 140
Though in this town be no apothecary,
I shall myself two herbés teachen you
That shall be for your heal and for your prow,[7]
And in our yard the herbés shall I find,
The which have of their property by kind[8] 145
To 'clean and purify you' eke above.
Sir, forget not this for Goddés love;
Ye be full choleric of complexión;
'Ware that the sun in his ascentión
Ne find you not replete of humours hot; 150
And if it do, I dare well lay a groat
That ye shall have a fever tertian,
Or else an ague, that may be your bane.
A day or two ye shall have digestives
Of wormés ere ye take your laxatives, 155
Of laureolé, centaury, and fumetere,
Or else of hellebore that groweth there,

[1] Swevenes—dreams. [2] Lemes—flames. [3] Conteke—contention. [4] Lite—small. [5] Do no force—take no heed. [6] For—because. [7] Prow—advantage. [8] Kind—nature.

Of catapucé [1] or of gaitre berries,[2]
Or herb ivy' growing in our yard that merry is;
Pick them right as they grow, and eat them in. 160
Be merry, husband; for your father kin [3]
Dreadeth no dream: I can say you no more."
"Madáme, quod he, *grand mercy* of your lore;
But nathéless as touching Dan Caton,
That hath of wisdom such a great renown, 165
Though that he bade no dreamés for to dread,
By God men may in oldé bookés read
Of many a man more of authority
Than ever Cato was, so may I the,[4]
That all the révers [5] say of his senténce, 170
And have well founden by experience
That dreamés be significatións
As well of joy as tribulatións
That folk enduren in this life presént:
There needeth make of this no argument; 175
The very prevé showeth it indeed.
"One of the greatest authors that men read
Saith thus; that whilom tway fellowés went
On pilgrimage in a full good intent,
And happened so they came into a town 180
Where there was such a congregatión
Of people, and eke so strait of herbergage,[6]
That they ne found as much as a cottáge
In which they bothé might ylodgéd be,
Wherefore they musten of necessity, 185
As for that night, departen company,
And each of them go'th to his hostelry,
And took his lodging as it wouldé fall.
"That one of them was lodgéd in a stall,
Far in a yard, with oxen of the plough; 190
That other man was lodged well enough,
As was his áventure or his fortúne,
That us govérneth all, as in commúne.

[1] Catapuce, (Ital. *catapuzza*, Fr. *catapuce*)—a kind of spurge. [2] Gaitre berries—berries of the dog-wood: *cornus femina*. [3] Father kin—for the kindred of your father. [4] So may I the—so may I thrive, prosper. [5] Revers, (Fr.) — dreamers. [6] Herbergage — lodging.

V. 177. *One of the greatest authors.*] Cicero [*de Divin.* l. i. c. 27,] relates this and the following story, but in a contrary order, and with so many other differences that one might be led to suspect that he was here quoted at second hand, if it were not usual with Chaucer in these stories of familiar life to throw in a number of natural circumstances not to be found in his original authors.—*Tyr.*

"And so befell that long ere it were day
This man met[1] in his bed there as he lay, 195
How that his fellow 'gan upon him call,
And said; 'Alas! for in an ox's stall
This night shall I be murdered there[2] I lie;
Now help me, dearé brother! or I die:
In allé hasté come to me,' he said. 200
"This man out of his sleep for fear abraid;[3]
But when that he was wakéd of his sleep
He turnéd him, and took of this no keep;[4]
Him thought his dream was but a vanity.
Thus twiés in his sleeping dreaméd he. 205
"And at the thriddé time yet his fellaw
Came, as he thought, and said; 'I now am slaw;[5]
Behold my bloody woundés deep and wide:
Arise up early in the morrow tide,
And at the west gate of the town (quod he) 210
A carté full of dung there shalt thou see,
In which my body is hid privily;
Do thilké cart arresten boldély.
My gold causéd my murder, soth[6] to sain.'
And told him every point how he was slain 215
With a full piteous facé, pale of hue;
And trusteth well his dream he found full true;
For on the morrow as soon as it was day,
To his fellowés inn he took his way,
And when that he came to this ox's stall, 220
After his fellow he began to call.
"The hosteler answeréd him anon,
And saidé; 'Sir, your fellow is agone;
As soon as day he went out of the town.'
"This man 'gan fallen in suspición, 225
Remembring on his dreamés that he met.[1]
And forth he go'th, no longer would he let,[7]
Unto the west gate of the town, and found
A dung cart as it went for to dung lond,
That was arrayéd[8] in the samé wise 230
As ye have heard the deadé man devise,
And with a hardy heart he 'gan to cry
Vengeance and justice of this felony;
'My fellow murdered is this samé night,
And in this cart he li'th gaping upright. 235
I cry out on the ministers, quod he,
That shoulden keep and rulen this city:

[1] Met—dreamed. [2] There—where. [3] Abraid—started. [4] Keep—care. [5] Slaw—slain. [6] Soth—truth. [7] Let—stay. [8] Arrayed—ordered, arranged.

Harow! alas! here li'th my fellow slain.'
"What should I more unto this talé sain?
The people' out start and cast the cart to ground, 240
And in the middle of the dung they found
The deadé man that murdered was all new.
"O blissful God! that art so good and true,
Lo, how that thou bewrayest murder' alway!
Murder will out, that see we day by day: 245
Murder is so wlatsome[1] and abominable
To God, that is so just and reasonable,
That he ne will not suffer it hylléd[2] be:
Though it abide a year, or two or three,
Murder will out; this is my conclusión. 250
"And right anon the min'sters of the town
Have hent[3] the carter, and so sore him pinéd,[4]
And eke the hostéler so sore engíned,[5]
That they beknew[6] their wickedness anon,
And were enhangéd by the necké bone. 255
"Here may ye see that dreamés be to dread.
And certés in the samé book I read,
Right in the next chapítre after this,
(I gabbé[7] not, so have I joy and bliss)
Two men that would have passéd o'er the sea, 260
For certain cause, into a far country,
If that the wind ne haddé been contrary,
That made them in a city for to tarry
That stood full merry upon a haven side:
But on a day, against the even tide, 265
The wind 'gan change, and blew right as they lest:[8]
Jolly and glad they wenten to their rest,
And casten them full early for to sail;
But to that one man fell a great merváile.
"That one of them in sleeping as he lay 270
He met[9] a wonder dream again the day:
He thought a man stood by his beddés side,
And him commanded that he should abide,
And said him thus; 'If thou to-morrow wend[10]
Thou shalt be drent;[11] my tale is at an end.' 275
"He woke, and told his fellow what he met,[9]
And praiéd him his voyage for to let;[12]
As for that day he pray'd him for t' abide.
"His fellow, that lay by his beddés side,
'Gan for to laugh, and scornéd him full fast: 280
'No dream, quod he, may so my heart aghast

[1] Wlatsome—loathsome. [2] Hylled—hidden. [3] Hent—seized. [4] Pined—tortured. [5] Engined—racked. [6] Beknew—made known. [7] Gabbe—talk vainly, lie. [8] Lest—desired. [9] Met—dreamed. [10] Wend—go. [11] Drent—drowned. [12] Let—stay.

That I will letten for to do my things :
I setté not a straw by thy dreamings,
For swevens [1] be but vanities and japes : [2]
Men dream all day of owlés and of apes, 285
And eke of many a masé [3] therewithal ;
Men dream of thing that never was nor shall.
But since I see that thou wilt here abide,
And thus forslothen [4] wilfully thy tide,
God wot it rueth me ; [5] and have good day : ' 290
And thus he took his leave and went his way.
" But ere that he had half his course ysailéd,
N'ot [6] I not why, ne what mischance it ailéd,
But casually the shippés bottom rent,
And ship and man under the water went 295
In sight of other shippés there beside,
That with him sailéd at the samé tide.
" And therefore, fairé Partelote so dear,
By such examples oldé may'st thou lere [7]
That no man shouldé be too reckéless 300
Of dreamés, for I say thee doubtéless
That many a dream full sore is for to dread.
" Lo, in the life of Saint Kenélm I read,
That was Kenulphus' son, the noble King
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm met [8] a thing. 305
* * * * *
" But thilké tale is all too long to tell,
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwell.
Shortly I say, as for conclusión,
That I shall have of this avisión,
Adversity ; and I say farthermore, 310
That I ne tell [9] of laxatives no store,
For they be venomous, I wot it well :
I them defy ; I love them never a deal. [10]
" But let us speak of mirth, and stint [11] all this.
Madamé Partelote, so have I bliss, 315
Of one thing God hath sent me largé grace, [12]
For when I see the beauty of your face,
Ye be so scarlet red about your eyen,
It maketh all my dreadé for to dien ;
For all so siker, [13] as '*In principio* 320
Mulier est hominis confusio,'
(Madam, the sentence of this Latin is,
' Woman is mannés joy and mannés bliss ; ')

[1] Swevens — dreams. [2] Japes — tricks. [3] Mase — wild fancy. [4] Forslothen—lose through sloth. [5] It rueth me—it moves my pity. [6] N'ot—ne wot, know not. [7] Lere — learn. [8] Met — dreamed. [9] Tell—set. [10] Never a deal—not a whit. [11] Stint—stop, cease. [12] Grace—favour, bounty. [13] Siker— surely, certainly.

For when I feel a-night your softé side,
* * * * *
I am so full of joy and of soláce 325
That I defié bothé sweven and dream."
And with that word he flew down from the beam,
For it was day; and eke his hennés all,
And with a chuck he 'gan them for to call,
For he had found a corn lay in the yard. 330
Royal he was, he was no more afeard;
* * * * *
He looketh as it were a grim leóun,
And on his toes he roameth up and down;
He deignéth not to set his feet to ground:
He chucketh when he hath a corn yfound, 335
And to him runnen then his wivés all.
Thus royal as a prince is in his hall
Leave I this Chanticleer in his pastúre,
And after will I tell his áventure.
When that the month in which the world began,
That highté March, when God first makéd man, 341
Was cómplete, and ypasséd were also
Sithen March ended thirty days and two,
Befell that Chanticleer in all his pride,
His seven wivés walking him beside, 345
Cast up his eyen to the brighté sun,
That in the sign of Taurus had yrun
Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more:
He knew by kind,[1] and by no other lore,
That it was prime,[2] and crew with blissful steven.[3]
"The sun, he said, is clomben up on heaven 351
Twenty degrees and one, and more ywis;[4]
Madamé Partelote, my worldés bliss,
Hearkeneth these blissful briddés[5] how they sing,
And see the freshé flow'rés how they spring; 355
Full is mine heart of revel and solace."
But suddenly him fell a sorr'ful case,[6]
For ever the latter end of joy is woe;
God wot that worldly joy is soon ago;[7]
And if a rethor[8] couldé fair indite, 360
He' in a chronícle might it safely write
As for a sov'reign notability.
Now every wise man let him hearken me:
This story is all so true, I undertake,
As is the book of Lancelot du Lake, 365

[1] Kind—nature. [2] Prime—first quarter of the day. [3] Steven—voice. [4] Ywis—certainly. [5] Briddes—birds. [6] Case—event. [7] Ago—gone. [8] Rethor—rhetorician.

That women hold in full great reverence.
Now will I turn again to my senténce.
A col fox, full of sly iniquity,
That in the grove had wonnéd[1] yearés three,
By high imaginatión forecast, 370
The samé night throughout the hedges brast[2]
Into the yard there[3] Chanticleer the fair
Was wont, and eke his wivés, to repair,
And in a bed of wortés[4] still he lay
Till it was passéd undern[5] of the day, 375
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall,
As gladly do these homicidés all
That in await liggen[6] to murder men.
O falsé murderer! rucking[7] in thy den,
O newé Scariot, newé Ganelon! 380
O false dissimuler, O Greek Sinon!
That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow,
O Chanticleer! accurséd be the morrow
That thou into thy yard flew from the beams;
Thou were full well ywarnéd by thy dreams 385
That thilké[8] day was perilous to thee:
But what that God forewot[9] must needés be,
After the opinión of certain clerkés,
Witness on him that any perfect clerk is,
That in schoolé is great altercatión 390
In this mattére and great disputison,[10]
And hath been of a hundred thousand men:
But I ne cannot boult it to the bren,[11]
As can the holy Doctor Augustin,
Or Boece, or the Bishop Bradwardin, 395

[1] Wonned—dwelt. [2] Brast—burst. [3] There—where. [4] Wortes—cabbages. [5] Undern—third hour, nine o'clock. [6] Liggen—lie. [7] Rucking—crouching, lying close. [8] Thilke—that same. [9] Forewot—foreknew. [10] Disputison—disputation. [11] Boult it, &c.—sift it to the bran.

V. 368. *A col fox.*] Skinner interprets this a blackish fox, as if it were *a cole fox*, Gl. *Urry*. It is much easier to refute this interpretation than to assign the true one. *Coll* appears from ver. 523 to have been a common name for a dog: in composition it is to be taken *in malam partem*, but in what precise sense I cannot say. —*Tyr*.

V. 380. *newe Ganelon.*] One of Charlemagne's officers, who by his treachery was the cause of the defeat at Roncevaux, and the death of Roland: for which he was torn to pieces by horses. This at least is the account of the author who calls himself Archbishop Turpin, and of the romancers who followed him; upon whose credit the name of Genelon or Ganelon was for several centuries a synonymous expression for the worst of traitors.

Whether that Goddés worthy foreweeting [1]
Straineth me needly for to do a thing,
(Needély clepe I simple necessity)
Or ellés if free choice be granted me
To do that samé thing or do it naught, 400
Though God forewot it ere that it was wrought,
Or if his weeting [2] straineth never a deal [3]
But by necessity conditional.
I will not have to do of such mattere;
My Tale is of a cock, as ye may hear, 405
That took his counsel of his wife, with sorrow,
To walken in the yard upon the morrow
That he had met [4] the dream, as I you told.
Womennés counsels be full often cold;
Womennés counsel brought us first to woe, 410
And made Adám from Paradise to go,
There [5] as he was full merry and well at ease:
But for I n'ot [6] to whom I might displease
If I counsél of women wouldé blame—
Pass over, for I said it in my game. 415
Read authors where they treat of such mattere,
And what they say of women ye may hear,
These be the cockés wordés and not mine;
I can none harm of no womán devine.[7]
Fair in the sand, to bathe her merrily, 420
Li'th Partelote, and all her sisters by,
Against the sun, and Chanticleer so free
Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea,
(For Phisiologus sayeth sikerly [8]
How that they singen well and merrily.) 425
And so befell that as he cast his eye
Among the wortés [9] on a butterfly,
He was 'ware of this fox that lay full low:
Nothing ne list him [10] thenné for to crow,
But cried anon, "Cok! cok!" and up he start 430
As man that was affrayéd in his heart,
For naturally a beast desireth flee
From his contráry if he may it see,
Though he ne'er erst had seen it with his eye.
This Chanticleer, when he 'gan him espy, 435
He would have fled, but that the fox anon
Said, "Gentle Sir, alas! what will ye done?

[1] Foreweeting—foreknowledge. [2] Weeting—knowledge. [3] Never a deal—not at all. [4] Met—dreamed. [5] There—where. [6] For I n'ot—because I know not. [7] Devine, (Fr.)—guess, imagine. [8] Sikerly—truly. [9] Wortes—cabbages. [10] Nothing ne list him—he cared nothing then.

Be ye afraid of me that am your friend?
Now certés I were worse than any fiend
If I to you would harm or villainy. 440
I am not come your counsel to espy,
But truély the cause of my coming
Was only for to hearken how ye sing,
For truély ye have as merry a steven[1]
As any angel hath that is in heaven; 445
Therwith ye have of music more feeling
Than had Boece, or any that can sing.
My Lord, your father, (God his soulé bless!)
And eke your mother of her gentleness,
Have in my house ybeen, to my great ease, 450
And certés, Sir, full fain would I you please.
But for men speak of singing, I will say,
(So may I brouken[2] well mine eyen tway,)
Save you, ne heard I never man so sing
As did your father in the morrowning: 455
Certés it was of heart all that he sung:
And for to make his voice the moré strong
He would so pain him, that with both his eyen
He musté wink, so loud he wouldé crien,
And standen on his tiptoes therewithal, 460
And stretchen forth his necké long and small.
And eke he was of such discretión,
That there n'as no man in no región
That him in song or wisdom mighté pass.
I have well read in Dan Burnel the ass 465
Among his vers,[3] how that there was a cock,
That, for[4] a priestés son gave him a knock
Upon his leg, while he was young and nice,[5]
He made him for to lose his benefice;
But certain there is no comparison 470
Betwixt the wisdom and discretión
Of youré father and his subtilty.
Now singeth, Sir, for Sainté Charity:
Let see, can ye your father counterfeit?"
This Chanticleer his wingés 'gan to beat, 475
As man that could not his treasón espy,
So was he ravish'd with his flattery.

[1] Steven—voice, note. [2] Brouken—enjoy. [3] Vers, (Fr. plural) verses. [4] For—because. [5] Nice—foolish.

V. 465. *in Dan Burnel the ass.*] The story alluded to is in a poem of Nigel Wireker, entitled *Burnellus, seu Speculum stultorum*, written in the time of Richard I. The original word was probably *Brunell*, from his brown colour, as the fox below, ver. 487, is called *Russell*, from his red colour, I suppose.—*Tyr.*

Alas! ye lordés, many a false flatóur
Is in your court, and many a losengeour,[1]
That pleaseth you well moré, by my faith, 480
Than he that sóthfastness[2] unto you saith.
Readeth Ecclesiast of flattery:
Beware, ye lordés, of their treachery.
This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes
Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close, 485
And 'gan to crowen loudé for the nones;[3]
And Dan Russéll the fox start up at once,
And by the gargat henté[4] Chanticleer,
And on his back towárd the wood him bear,
For yet ne was there no man that him sued.[5] 490
O destiny! that may'st not be eschew'd,[6]
Alas that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas, his wife ne raughté[7] not of dreams!
And on a Friday fell all this mischance.

* * * * *

Certés such cry nor lamentation 495
N'as ne'er of ladies made, when Ilion
Was won, and Pyrrhus with his straité sword
When he had hent[8] King Priam by the beard
And slain him, (as saith us *Eneidos*)
As maden all the hennés in the close 500
When they had seen of Chanticleer the sight;
But sovereignly[9] Dame Parteloté shright[10]
Full louder than did Asdruballés wife
When that her husband had ylost his life,
And that the Romans hadden burnt Carthége; 505
She was so full of torment and of rage
That wilfully into the fire she start,
And burnt her selven with a steadfast heart.
O woful hennés! right so crieden ye,
As when that Nero brenté the city 510
Of Romé, cried the Senatorés wives
For[11] that their husbands losten all their lives:
Withouten guilt this Nero hath them slain.
Now will I turn unto my Tale again.
The sely[12] widow and her daughtren two 515
Hearden these hennés cry and maken woe,
And out at the doorés starten they anon,
And saw the fox towárd the wood is gone,

[1] Losengeour—Fr. flatterer, parasite. [2] Sothfastness—truth. [3] For the nones—for the occasion. [4] Gargat hente—caught by the throat. [5] Sued—followed. [6] Eschewed—avoided. [7] Raughte—recked, cared. [8] Hent—seized. [9] Sovereignly—chiefly, above all. [10] Shright—shrieked. [11] For—because. [12] Selv—simple.

And bore upon his back the cock away:
They crieden out, "Harow and well-away! 520
A ha! the fox!" and after him they ran,
And eke with stavés many another man;
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot and Garland,
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand;
Ran cow and calf; and eke the very hoggés, 525
So fearéd were for barking of the doggés
And shouting of the men and women eke,
They rannen so them thought their heartés break;
They yelléden as fiendés do in hell;
The duckés criéd as men would them quell;[1] 530
The geese for fearé flewen o'er the trees,
Out of the hivé came the swarm of bees:
So hideous was the noise, a *benedicite!*
Certés he Jacké Straw and his menie[2]
Ne maden never shoutés half so shrill, 535
When that they woulden any Fleming kill,
As thilké[3] day was made upon the fox.
Of brass they broughten beamés[4] and of box,
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pooped,[5]
And therewithal they shriekéd and they hooped; 540
It seem'd as that the heaven shouldé fall.
Now, goodé men, I pray you hearkeneth all:
Lo how Fortúné turneth suddenly
The hope and pride eke of her enemy!
This cock that lay upon the fox's back, 545
In all his dread unto the fox he spake,
And saidé; "Sir, if that I were as ye,
Yet would I sain, (as wisly[6] God help me)
'Turneth again, ye proudé churlés all,
A very pestilence upon you fall: 550
Now I am come unto the woodés side,
Maugre your head the cock shall here abide;
I will him eat in faith, and that anon.'"
The fox answer'd; "In faith it shall be done:"
And as he spake the word, all suddenly 555
The cock broke from his mouth deliverly,[7]
And high upon a tree he flew anon.
And when the fox saw that the cock was gone,
"Alas! quod he, O Chanticleer, alas!
I have (quod he) ydone to you trespáss, 560
In as much as I makéd you afeard
When I you hent[8] and brought out of your yard;

[1] As men, &c.—as though men would kill them. [2] Menie—followers. [3] Thilke—this. [4] Beames—trumpets. [5] Pooped—the blowing of a horn. [6] Wisly—surely. [7] Deliverly—briskly. [8] Hent—seized.

But, Sir, I did it in no wick' intent :
Come down, and I shall tell you what I meant :
I shall say soth[1] to you, God help me so." 565
" Nay then, quod he, I shrew[2] us bothé two ;
And first I shrew myself both blood and bones
If thou beguile me oftener than once :
Thou shalt no moré through thy flattery
Do me to sing and winken with my eye, 570
For he that winketh when he shouldé see,
All wilfully, God let him never the."[3]
" Nay, quod the fox, but God give him mischance
That is so indiscreet of governance
That jangleth when that he should hold his peace." 575
Lo, which it is for to be reckéless
And negligent, and trust on flattery.
But ye that holden this Tale a folly,
As of a fox, or of a cock or hen,
Take the morality thereof, good men ; 580
For, Saint Paulé saith, that " all that written is,
To our doctríne it is ywritten ywis."[4]
Taketh the fruit, and let the chaff be still.
Now, goodé God, if that it be thy will,
As saith my Lord, so make us all good men, 585
And bring us to thy highé bliss.—*Amen.*
" Sir Nunnés Priest, our Hosté said anon,
Yblessed be thy 'head and every bone ;'
This was a merry Tale of Chanticleer.
* * * * *
But, Sir, fair fall you for your Tale." 590
And after that he with full merry cheer
Said unto another as ye shall hear.
* * * * *

[1] Soth—true. [2] Shrew—curse. [3] The—thrive, prosper. [4] Ywis —certainly.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE.

* * * * *

ERE we had ridden fully fivé mile,
At Boughton-under-Blee us 'gan atake[1]
A man that clothéd was in clothés black,
And underneath he wore a white surplíce.
His hackéney, that was all pomelee gris,[2] 5
So sweaté that it wonder was to see;
It seeméd as he had prickéd[3] milés three.
The horse eke that his Yeoman rode upon
So sweaté that unnethés might he gone:[4]
About the peytrel[5] stood the foam full high; 10
He was of foam as fleckéd[6] as a pie.
A mailé twayfold[7] on his crupper lay,
It seeméd that he carriéd little' array;
All light for summer rode this worthy man.
And in my hearté wonder I began 15
What that he was, till that I understood[8]
How that his cloak was sewed to his hood,
For which when I had long aviséd[9] me,
I deeméd him some canon for to be.
His hat hung at his back down by a lace, 20
For he had ridden more than trot or pace;
He had aye prickéd[3] like as he were wood.[10]
A clote-leaf[11] he had laid under his hood
For sweat, and for to keep his head from heat:
But it was joyé for to see him sweat; 25
His forehead droppéd as a stillatory[12]
Were full of plantain or of paritory.[13]
And when that he was come he 'gan to cry,
"God save, quod he, this jolly company!

[1] Atake—overtake. [2] Pomelee-gris—dapple-grey. [3] Pricked—ridden hard. [4] Unnethes might he gone—he was scarcely able to go. [5] Peytrel—horse's breast-plate. [6] Flecked—spotted. [7] Maile twayfold—double mail, or portmanteau. [8] Understood—found out. [9] Avised, (Fr.)—observed, considered. [10] Wood—mad. [11] Clote-leaf—leaf of burdock. [12] Stillatory—still. [13] Paritory—wall-flower: from the Latin, *parietaria*. In this line the word *that* or *which* is implied;—"(which) were full of plantain or of paritory."

Fast have I prickéd, quod he, for your sake, 30
Becausé that I wouldé you atake,
To riden in this merry company."
His Yeoman was eke full of courtesy,
And saidé; "Sirs, now, in the morrow tide,
Out of your hostelry I saw you ride, 35
And warnéd here my lord and sovereign,
Which that to riden with you is full fain
For his disport; he loveth dalliance."
"Friend, for thy warning God give thee good chance,[1]
Then said our Host: certain it wouldé seem 40
Thy lord were wise, and so I may well deem;
He is full jocund also dare I lay:
Can he aught tell a merry tale or tway,
With which he gladden may this company?"
"Who, Sir? my lord? Yea, Sir, withouten lie, 45
He can[2] of mirth and eke of jollity
Not but enough;[3] also, Sir, trusteth me,
And ye him knew all so well as do I,
Ye woulden wonder' how well and craftily
He couldé work, and that in sundry wise: 50
He hath take on him many a great emprise,[4]
Which were full hard for any that is here
To bring about, but[5] they of him it lere.[6]
As homely as he rid'th amongés you,
If ye him knew it would be for your prow;[7] 55
Ye woulden not forgone his ácquaintance
For muchel good, I dare lay in ballánce
All that I have in my possessión.
He is a man of high discretión;
I warn you well, he is a passing man." 60
"Well, quod our Host, I pray thee tell me then
Is he a clerk or no? Tell what he is."
"Nay, he is greater than a clerk ywis,[8]
Saidé this Yeoman; and in wordés few,
Host, of his craft somewhat I will you show. 65
"I say, my lord can such a subtlety,
(But all his craft ye may not weet[9] of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working)
That all the ground on which we been riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town, 70
He could all cleané turnen up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold."
And when this Yeoman had this tale ytold,

[1] Good chance — good fortune. [2] Can — knows. [3] Not but enough—no less than enough. [4] Emprise—enterprise. [5] But—except. [6] Lere — learn. [7] Prow — profit. [8] Ywis — certainly. [9] Weet—know.

Unto our Host, he said, "*Benedicite!*
This thing is wonder marvellous to me, 75
Since that thy Lord is of so high prudence,
Because of which,[1] men should him reverence,
That of his worship recketh he so lite;[2]
His overest slop[3] it is not worth a mite,
As in effect, to him, so may I go; 80
It is all baudy[4] and to-tore also.
Why is thy Lord so sluttish I thee pray,
And is of power better cloth to beye,[5]
If that his deed accorded with thy speech?
Tellé me that, and that I thee beseech." 85
"Why? quod this Yeoman, whereto ask ye me?
God help me so, for he shall never the:[6]
(But I will not avowen that I say,
And therefore keep it secret I you pray)
He is too wise in faith, as I believe: 90
Thing that is overdone it will not preve[7]
Aright, as clerkés say; it is a vice;
Wherefore in that I hold him lew'd and nice;[8]
For when a man hath overgreat a wit
Full oft him happeth to misusen it: 95
So doth my lord, and that me grieveth sore:
God it amend; I can say now no more."
"Thereof no force,[9] good Yeoman, quod our Host;
Since of the conning[10] of thy lord thou wo'st,[11]
Tell how he doth, I pray thee heartily, 100
Since that he is so crafty and so sly.
Where dwellen ye, if it to tellen be?"
"In the suburbés of a town, quod he,
Lurking in hernés[12] and in lanés blind,
Whereas these robbers and these thieves by kind[13]
Holden their privy fearful residence, 106
As they that dare not showen their presence;
So faren we, if I shall say the soth."[14]
"Yet, quod our Hosté, let me talk to thee;
Why art thou so discoloured of thy face?" 110
"Peter, quod he, God give it hardé grace;
I am so used the hoté fire to blow,
That it hath changéd my colóur I trow:
I n'am not wont in no mirróur to pry,
But swinké[15] sore, and learn to multiply.[16] 115

[1] Because, &c.—on account of which. [2] Lite—little. [3] Overest slop—upper garment. [4] Baudy—soiled, dirty. [5] Beye—buy. [6] The—thrive. [7] Preve—stand trial. [8] Lew'd and nice—unwise and foolish. [9] Thereof no force—no matter for that. [10] Conning—skill, knowledge. [11] Wo'st—knowest. [12] Hernes—corners. [13] Kind—nature. [14] Soth—truth. [15] Swinke—labour. [16] Multiply—to make gold and silver.

We blund'ren ever and poren in the fire,
And for all that, we fail of our desire;
For ever we lacken our conclusión.
To muchel folk we do illusión,
And borrow gold, be it a pound or two, 120
Or ten or twelve, or many summés mo,
And make them weenen [1] at the leasté way
That of a pound we connen maken tway;
Yet is it false; and aye we have good hope
It for to do, and after it we grope: 125
But that sciénce is so far us beforn,
We mowen not,[2] although we had it sworn,
It overtake, it flit[3] away so fast;
It will us maken beggars at the last."
While this Yeomán was thus in his talking, 130
This canon drew him near and heard all thing
Which this Yeoman spaké; for suspición
Of mennés speech ever had this canón;
For Cato saith, that "he that guilty is,
Deemeth all thing be spoken of him ywis:"[4] 135
That was the cause he 'gan so nigh him draw
To his Yeomán, to hearken all his saw;[5]
And thus he said unto his Yeoman tho:[6]
"Hold thou thy peace, and speak no wordés mo,
For if thou do, thou shalt it dear abie:[7] 140
Thou sland'rest me here in this company,
And eke discoverest that thou shouldest hide."
"Yea, quod our Host, tell on, what so betide;
Of all his threatening recké not a mite."
"In faith, quod he, no more I do but lite." 145
And when this canon saw it would not be,
But his Yeomán would tell his privity,
He fled away for very sorrow' and shame.
"Ah! quod the Yeoman, here shall rise a game:
All that I can, anon I will you tell, 150
Since he is gone: the foulé fiend him quell,[8]
For ne'er hereafter will I with him meet
For penny nor for pound, I you behete.[9]
He that me broughté first unto that game,
Ere that he die sorrow have he and shame, 155
For it is earnest [10] to me by my faith;
That feel I well, what so any man saith;
And yet for all my smart and all my grief,
For all my sorrow, labour, and mischief,[11]

[1] Weenen—imagine, think. [2] Mowen not—may not, are not able. [3] Flit—(for) flitteth, fleeth. [4] Ywis—surely. [5] Saw—saying. [6] Tho—then. [7] Abie—abide. [8] Quell—kill, destroy. [9] You behete—promise you. [10] Earnest—serious. [11] Mischief—misfortune.

I couldé never leave it in no wise. 160
Now wouldé God my witté might suffice
To tellen all that 'longeth to that art;
But nathéless yet will I tellen part:
Since that my lord is gone I will not spare;
Such thing as that I know I will declare."* 165

* "The introduction of the Canon's Yeoman to tell a tale at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It should seem that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his work, in order to insert a satire against the Alchemists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time and produced its usual evils, may fairly be inferred from an Act which was passed soon after, 5 Hen. IV. c. iv., to make it felony *to multiply gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.*"—*Tyrwhitt, Discourse*, § 38.

It is not unworthy of remark, that in this early stage of science, Chaucer should have had the good sense to see through the folly of this pretended science of converting the baser metals into gold; and which for ages deluded so many people, shrewd ones as well as simple. So lately even as in the time of Steele, the wild pursuit was not wholly abandoned; for the author of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, who was acute enough in perceiving the weaknesses of his fellow mortals, could himself be induced to lose that time in the attempt which a steady employment of his pen, and prudent economy of its proceeds, would have superseded. Steele had the power of working a greater miracle than that of turning lead into gold;—he needed but to write words upon paper. The leaden thoughts of some writers, and their success in making account of them, would lead one to conclude that the science of alchemy was no other than an allegory.

"Ye be right hot; I see well how ye sweat;
Have here a cloth and wipe away the wet."—l. 631.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE.

WITH this canón I dwelt have seven year,
And of his science am I ne'er the near;[1]
All that I had I have ylost thereby,
And God wot so have many more than I.
Where I was wont to be right fresh and gay 170
Of clothing, and of other good array,
Now may I wear a hose upon my head;
And where my colour was both fresh and red,
Now is it wan and of a leaden hue;
(Whoso it useth so shall he it rue) 175
And of my swink[2] yet blearéd is mine eye;
Lo which[3] advantage is to multiply.[4]
That sliding science hath me made so bare,
That I have no good where that e'er I fare;

[1] The near — the nearer. [2] Swink—labour. [3] Which—what. [4] Multiply—to make gold, &c.

The Canon's Yeoman's Tale.] A priest of London, more covetous than wise, is deceived by a canon professing the art of alchemy. —*Urry.*

And yet I am indebted so thereby, 180
Of gold that I have borrowed truély,
That while I live I shall it quiten never;
Let every man beware by me for ever.
What manner man that casteth him thereto,
If he continue', I hold his thrift ydo;[1] 185
So help me God, thereby shall he not win,
But empt' his purse, and make his wittés thin.
And when he through his madness and folly,
Hath lost his owen good through jeopardy,
Then he exciteth other folk thereto, 190
To lose their good as he himself hath do;
For unto shrewés[2] joy it is and ease
To have their fellows in painé and disease.[3]
Thus was I onés learnéd of a clerk.[4]
Of that no charge;[5] I will speak of our work. 195
When we be where as we shall exercise
Our elvish[6] craft we seemen wonder wise,
Our termés be so clergial and quaint.[7]
I blow the fire till that my hearté faint.
What should I tellen each proportión 200
Of thingés whiché that we work upon,
As on five or six ounces, may well be,
Of silver, or some other quantity?
And busy me to tellen you the names,
As orpiment, burnt bonés, iron squames,[8] 205
That into powder grounden been full small?
And in an earthen pot how put is all,
And salt yput in, and also peppére,
Before these powders that I speak of here,
And well ycovered with a lamp of glass? 210
And of much other thing which that there was?

[1] Thrift ydo — labour frustrated. [2] Shrewes — bad characters. [3] Disease—discomfort. [4] Thus was I, &c.—so was I once taught by a clerk. [5] Of that no charge—no matter for that. [6] Elvish — mischievous. [7] Clergial and quaint — learned and curious. [8] Squames—scales.

V. 189. *through jeopardy.*] The true original of our word *jeopardy*, our etymologists have sadly mistaken: they deduce it from *j'ai perdu* or *jeu perdu*, but I rather believe it to be a corruption of *jeu parti.*—[In the original text the word used was *jupartie.* ED.] —A *jeu parti* is properly a game in which the chances are exactly even. See *Froissart*, v. i. c. 234; 'Ils n'estoient pas à *jeu parti* contre les *François.* V. ii. c. 9, Se nous les voyons à *jeu parti.*" From hence it signifies any thing uncertain or hazardous. In the old French poetry the discussion of a problem where much might be said on both sides was called a *jeu parti.* See *Poesies du Roy de Navarre, Chanson* xlviii. and *Gloss.* in v. See also *Du Cange*, in v. *Jocus partitus.—Tyr.*

And of the pots and glasses engluting.[1]
That of the air might passen out no thing?
And of the easy[2] fire, and smart also,
Which that was made? and of the care and woe 215
That we had in our matters súbliming,
And in amalgaming and calcining
Of quicksilver, yclep'd Mercúry crude?
For all our sleightés we can not conclude.
Our orpiment[3] and súbliméd mercúry, 220
Our grounden litarge[4] eke on the porphúry,[5]
Of each of these of ounces a certáin
Not helpeth us; our labour is in vain.
Ne, neither our spiríts ascentión,
Ne our mattéres that lie all six adown, 225
May in our working nothing us aváil,
For lost is all our labour and traváil,
And all the cost, a twenty devil way
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.
There is also full many another thing 230
That is unto our craft appértaining,
Though I by order them not rehearsen can,
Becausé that I am a lewéd[6] man,
Yet will I tell them as they come to mind,
Though I ne cannot set them in their kind,[7] 235
As bol-armoniac, verdigris, borás,
And sundry vessels made of earth and glass,
* * * our descensories,[8]
Phials, croslettés,[9] and sublímatories,[10]
Cucurbités[11] and álembikés[12] eke, 240
And other such gear, dear enough a leak,
What needeth it for to rehearse them all?
Waterés rubifying, and búllés gall,
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstóne,
And herbés could I tell eke many one, 245
As egremoine,[13] valerian, and lunary,[14]
And other such, if that me list to tarry,
Our lampés burning bothé night and day,
To bring about our craft, if that we may,

[1] Engluting—enluting; stopping the joint with clay. [2] Easy—slow. [3] Orpiment—a mineral of that name. [4] Litarge—white lead. [5] Porphury—porphyry; a marble. [6] Lewed—unlearned. [7] Kind—in their natural order. [8] Descensory—vessel used for extracting oils. [9] Croslettes—crucibles. [10] Sublimatories—vessels used for sublimating, or separating the parts of a body, and driving them to the top of the vessel in the form of a very fine powder.—*Gloss.* [11] Cucurbite—a vessel used in distillation, in the form of a gourd.—*Gloss.* [12] Alembic—a still. [13] Egremoine—agrimony. [14] Lunary—moonwort, a herb.

Our furnace eke of calcinatión, 250
And of waters albificatión,
Unslackéd limé, chalk, and glaire of ey,[1]
Powders divérse, ashes, * * * and clay,
Searéd pokettés,[2] sal petre, and vitriol,
And divers firés made of wood and coal, 255
Sal tartar, alcaly, and salt preparate,
And combust matters and coagulate,
Clay made with horse and mannés hair, and oil
Of tartar, alum, glass, barm, wort, and argoil,[3]
Rosalgar[4] and other mattéres imbibing, 260
And eke of our mattéres encorporing,
And of our silver citrinatión,
Our cementing and fermentatión,
Our ingots, tests,[5] and many thingés mo?
I will you tell as was me taught also 265
The fouré spirits and the bodies seven
By order', as oft I heard my lord them neven.[6]
The firsté spirit Quicksflver clepéd is,
The second Orpiment, the third ywis
Sal Armoniak, and the fourth Brimstóne. 270
The bodies seven eke, lo them hear anon:
Sol gold is, and Luna silvér we threpe,[7]
Mars iron, Mercúry quícksilver we clepe,
Saturnus lead, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus copper, by my father kin.[8] 27
This curséd craft who so will exercise
He shall no good have that him may suffice,
For all the good he spendeth thereabout,
He losen shall, thereof have I no doubt.
Who so that listeth[9] utter his follý 2
Let him come forth and learn to multiply;
And every man that hath aught in his coffer
Let him appear and wax a philosópher,
Ascauncé[10] that craft is so light to lere.[11]
Nay, nay, God wot all be he monk or frere,

[1] Glaire of ey—white of egg. [2] Seared pokettes—I am totally a loss for the meaning of this last word. [3] Argoil—potter's clay. [4] Rosalgar—red arsenic. [5] Tests—vessels for attesting, or assaying, metals. [6] Neven—name. [7] Threpe—name. [8] Father kin—by my father's kindred. [9] Listeth—desireth. [10] Ascaunce—as if. See note. [11] Lere—learn.

V. 284. *Ascaunce.*] The Glossary interprets ascaunce to mean askew, aside, sideways, in a side view; upon what authority I know not. It will be better to examine the other passages in which the same word occurs before we determine the sense of it.

"*Ascaunce*, lo! is this not wisely spoken?"—*Troilus*, i. 285.

Priest or canón, or any other wight,
Though he sit at his book both day and night
In learning of this elvish[1] nicé[2] lore,
All is in vain, and pardé muchel more
To learn a lewéd[3] man this subtilty; 290
Fie! speaké not thereof, for it will not be:
And conne he letterure[4] or conne he none
As in effect he shall find it all one,
For bothé two, by my salvatión,
Concluden in multiplicatión[5] 295
Yliké well when they have all ydo;
This is to say, they faillen bothé two.
Yet forgot I to maken rehearsal
Of waters corrosive and of limaile,[6]
And of bodies mollificatión, 300
And also of their induratión,
Oilés, ablusións, metál fusíble;
To tellen all would passen any Bible
That O where is;[7] wherefore as for the best
Of all these namés now will I me rest; 305
For as I trow I have you told enow
To raise a fiend, all look he ne'er so row.[8]

[1] Elvish—mischievous, fantastic. [2] Nice—foolish. [3] Lewed—ignorant. [4] Conne he letterure—know he literature. [5] Multiplication—the art of making the precious metals. [6] Limaile—metal filings. [7] O where—any where. [8] Row—grim, rough.

"*Ascaunce*, what! may I not standen here?"—*Troilus*, i. 292.

"*Ascaunce* I am of manners most changeable."—*Lydgate Trag.* fol. 136. b.

In the text, and in the last of the above instances, *ascaunce* seems to signify simply *as if, quasi*; in the quotations from *Troilus* it signifies a little more,—*as if to say*. This latter signification may be clearly established from the third line, which in the Italian original (*Philostrato di Boccaccio*, l. 1,) stands thus;—

"*Quasi dicesse*, e non ci si puo stare?"

So that *ascaunce* is there equivalent to *quasi dicesse* in Italian. As to the etymology of this word, I must confess myself more at a loss. I observe, however, that one of a similar form, in the Teut. has a similar signification. *Als-kacks, quasi, quasi vero*, Kilian. Our *as* is the same with *als*, Teut. and Sax.; it is only a farther corruption of *al-so*. Perhaps, therefore, *ascaunce* may have been originally *als-kanse*. *Kanse*, in Teut. is chance, Fr. and Eng. I will just add that this very rare phrase was also used, as I suspect, by the author of the continuation of the Canterbury Tales, first printed by Mr. Urry. *Prol.* v. 361,

"And all *ascaunce* she lov'd him well, she took him by the swere,"

is printed *a staunce.*—*Tyr.*

Ah! nay, let be; the philosópher's stone,
Elixir clepéd, we seeken fast each one,
For had we him then were we siker' enow;[1] 310
But unto God of heaven I make avow,
For all our craft, when we have all ydo,
And all our sleight, he will not come us to:
He hath ymade us spenden muchel good,
For sorrow' of which almost we waxen wood[2] 315
But that good hope creepeth in our heart,
Supposing ever, though we soré smart,
To be relievéd of him afterward:
Suché supposing and hope is sharp and hard:
I warn you well it is to seeken ever: 320
That future *temps* hath madé men dissever,
In trust thereof, from all that ever they had,
Yet of that art they cannot waxen sad,
For unto them it is a bitter sweet:
So seemeth it, for ne' had they but a sheet 325
Which that they mighten wrap them in a-night,
And a bratt[3] to walken in by day-light,
They would them sell, and spend it on this craft:
They cannot stinten[4] till no thing be laft;
And evermore, where ever that they gone, 330
Men may them kennen[5] by smell of brimstone:
For all the world they stinken as a goat;

* * * * *

That though a man a milé from them be
The savour will infect him, trusteth me.
Lo, thus by smelling and thread-bare array, 335
If that men list, this folk they knowen may;
And if a man will ask them privily
Why they be clothéd so unthriftily,[6]
They right anon will rounen[7] in his ear,
And saién, if that they espiéd were 340
Men would them slay because of their sciénce.
Lo, thus these folk betrayen innocence.
Pass over this; I go my Tale unto.
Ere that the pot be on the fire ydo,
Of metals with a certain quantity 345
My lord them temp'reth, and no man but he,
(Now he is gone I dare say boldély)
For as men say he can do craftily,
Algate[8] I wot well he hath such a name,
And yet full oft he runneth in a blame; 350

[1] Siker enow—secure enough. [2] Wood—mad. [3] Bratt—coarse cloak. [4] Stinten — cease. [5] Kennen — know, discover. [6] Unthriftily — poorly, shabbily. [7] Rounen — whisper. [8] Algate — although.

And weet[1] ye how? full oft it falleth so,
The pot to-breaketh, and farewell! all is go.
These metals be of so great violence
Our wallés may not make them résistance,
But if[2] they weren wrought of lime and stone; 355
They piercen so that through the wall they gone;
And some of them sink down into the ground,
(Thus have we lost by timés many a pound,)
And some are scattered all the floor about,
Some leapen into the roof withouten doubt. 360
Though that the fiend not in our sight him show,
I trow that he be with us, thilké shrew[3]
In hell, where that he is lord and sire,
Nor is there no more woe, rancóur, nor ire.
When that our pot is broke, as I have said, 365
Every man chid, and held him evil apaid:
Some said it was long on the fire-making,
Some said nay, it was long on the blowing;
(Then was I 'fear'd, for that was my office)
"Straw!" quod the third, "ye be lewéd and nice;[4] 370
It was not temper'd as it ought to be;"
"Nay," quod the fourth, "stint[5] and hearken me;
Because our fire was not made of beech,
That is the cause, and other none, so the iche."[6]
I cannot tell whereon it was along, 375
But well I wot great strife is us among.
"What?" quod my lord, "there is no more to done;
Of these perils I will beware eftsoon;
I am right siker[7] that the pot was craséd.
Be as be may, be ye no thing amaséd; 380
As usage is, let sweep the floor as swithe;[8]
Pluck up your heartés, and be glad and blithe."
The mullok[9] on a heap ysweepéd was,
And on the floor ycast a canévas,
And all this mullok in a sieve ythrow, 385
And sifted, and ypickéd many a throw.[10]
"Pardé," quod one, "somewhat of our metál
Yet is there here, though that we have not all;
And though this thing mishappéd hath as now
Another time it may be well ynow. 390
We musten put our good in áventure;
A merchant pardé may not aye endure,
Trusteth me well, in his prosperity;
Sometime his good is drenchéd in the sea,

[1] Weet—know. [2] But if—unless. [3] Shrew—wretch, bad fellow. [4] Lewed and nice—ignorant and foolish. [5] Stint—stay. [6] So the iche—so may I succeed. [7] Siker—certain. [8] Swithe—quickly. [9] Mullok—rubbish. [10] Many a throw—many times.

And sometime cometh it safe unto the lond." 395
"Peace! quod my lord, the next time I will fond[1]
To bring our craft all in another plight,
And but I do, Sirs, let me have the wit:
There was default in somewhat well I wot."
Another said, "The fire was over hot: 400
But be it hot or cold I dare say this,
That we concluden evermore amiss;
We fail alway of that which we would have,
And in our madness evermore we rave,
And when we be together evereach one, 405
Every man seemeth a Solomon.
But all thing which that shineth as the gold
Ne is no gold, as I have heard it told,
Ne every apple that is fair at eye
Ne is not good, what so men clap[2] or cry. 410
Right so, lo, fareth it amongés us;
He that seemeth the wisest, by Jesus
Is most fool when it cometh to the prefe,[3]
And he that seemeth truest is a thief:"
That shall ye know ere that I from you wend,[4] 415
By that I of my Tale have made an end.
There was a canon of religión
Amongés us, would infect all a town,
Though it as great were as was Niniveh,
Rome, Alisandre, Troy, or other three. 420
His sleightés[5] and his infinite falseness
There couldé no man writen, as I guess,
Though that he mighté live a thousand year:
In all this world of falseness n'is his peer,
For in his termés he will him so wind, 425
And speak his wordés in so sly a kind,
When he communen shall with any wight,
That he will make him doaten anon right
But it a fiend be,[6] as himselven is.
Full many a man hath he beguil'd ere this, 430
And will, if that he may live any while;
And yet men go and riden many a mile
Him for to seek, and have his acquaintance,
Not knowing of his falsé governance;
And if you lust to give me audience 435
I will it tellen here in your presénce.
But, worshipful canóns religióus,
Ne deemeth not that I slander your house,

[1] Fond—strive. [2] Clap—chatter. [3] Prefe—proof. [4] Wend—depart. [5] Sleightes—tricks. [6] But it, &c.—*i. e.* "except he were a fiend."

Although that my Talé of a canon be :
Of every order some shrew[1] is pardé; 440
And God forbid that all a company
Should rue a singular[2] mannés follý.
To slander you is no thing mine intent,
But to correcten that is mis[3] I meant.
This Talé was not only told for you, 445
But eke for other more : ye wot well how
That 'mong Christés apostéles twelve
There was no traitor but Judás himselve;
Then why should all the reménant have blame
That guiltless were? By you I say the same; 450
Save only this, if ye will hearken me,
If any Judas in your convent be,
Removeth him betimés I you rede,[4]
If shame or loss may causen any drede;[5]
And be no thing displeaséd I you pray, 455
But in this casé heark'neth what I say.
In London was a priest, an annualler,[6]
That therein dwelléd haddé many a year,
Which was so pleasant and so serviceáble
Unto the wife there as he was at table, 460
That she would suffer him no thing to pay
For board ne clothing, went he ne'er so gay;
And spending silver had he right enow :
Thereof no force;[7] I will proceed as now,
And tellen forth my Talé of the canon 465
That brought this priesté to confusión.
This falsé canon came upon a day
Unto the priestés chamber there[8] he lay,
Beseeching him to lend him a certáin
Of gold, and he would quite[9] it him again. 470
"Lend me a mark, quod he, but dayés three,
And at my day I will it quiten thee;
And if it so be that thou find me false
Another day, hang me up by the halse."[10]
This priest him took a mark, and that as swith,[11] 475
And this canón him thankéd often sith,[12]

[1] Shrew—infamous, cursed. [2] Singular—single, one. [3] Mis—wrong. [4] Rede—counsel. [5] Drede—fear. [6] Annualler—*see note.* [7] No force — no matter. [8] There — where. [9] Quite — return.— [10] Halse—neck. [11] Swith—quickly. [12] Sith—times.

V. 457. *a priest, an annualler.*] They were called *annuallers*, not from their receiving a yearly stipend, as the Gloss. explains it, but from their being employed solely in singing annuals or anniversary masses for the dead, without any cure of souls.—*Tyr.*

And took his leave, and wenté forth his way;
And at the thirdé day brought his moneý,
And to the priest he took his gold again,
Whereof this priest was wonder glad and fain. 480
"Certés, quod he, nothing annoyeth me
To lend a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what thing were in my possessión,
When he so true is of conditión 485
That in no wise he breaken will his day;
To such a man I can nevér say nay."
"What? quod this canon, should I be untrue?
Nay, that were thing fallen all of the new:[1]
Truth is a thing that I will ever keep,
Unto the day in which that I shall creep 490
Into my grave, and ellés God forbid!
Believeth this as siker[2] as your creed.
God thank I, and in good time be it said,
That there n'as never man yet evil' apaid
For gold ne silver that he to me lent, 495
Ne never falsehood in mine heart I meant.
"And, Sir, quod he, now of my privity,
Since ye so goodly have been unto me,
And kithéd[3] to me so great gentleness,
Somewhat to quiten with your kindéness
I will you show, and if you lust to lere,[4]
I will you teachen pleinly[5] the mannere
How I can worken in philosophy:
Taketh good heed, ye shall well see at eye
That I will do a mastery ere I go."
"Ye? quod the priest, ye, Sir, and will ye so?
Marry, thereof I pray you heartily."
"At your commandément, Sir, truely,
Quod the canón, and ellés God forbid."
Lo, how this thiefé could his service bede.[6]
Full soth[7] it is that such profér'd service
Stinketh, as witnessen these oldé wise,
And that full soon I will it verify
In this canón, root of all treachery,
That evermore delight hath and gladness
(Such fiendly thoughtés in his heart empress)
How Christés people he may to mischief bring:
God keep us from his false dissimuling!
Naught wist this priest with whom that he dealt,
Nor of his harm-coming nothing he felt.

[1] All of the new—all freshly. [2] Siker—surely. [3] Kithed—shown.
[4] Lust to lere—desire to learn. [5] Pleinly—fully. [6] Bede—order.
[7] Soth—true.

O sely[1] priest! O sely innocent!
With covetise[2] anon thou shalt be blent;[3]
O gracéless! full blind is thy conceit,
For nothing art thou 'ware of the deceit
Which that this fox yshapen hath to thee; 525
His wily wrenches[4] thou ne may'st not flee:
Wherefore to go to the conclusión,
That réferreth to thy confusión,
Unhappy man! anon I will me hie
To tellen thine unwit and thy follý, 530
And eke the falseness of that other wretch,
As farforth as that my conning[5] will stretch.
This canon was my lord, ye woulden ween;[6]
Sir Host, in faith, and by the heaven queen,
It was another canon, and not he 535
That can a hundred part more subtlety:
He hath betrayéd folkés many a time;
Of his falseness it dulleth me to rhyme:
Ever when that I speak of his falsehead
For shame of him my cheekés waxen red, 540
Algatés[7] they beginnen for to glow,
(For redness have I none, right well I know,)
In my viságé, for fumés diverse
Of metals which ye have heard me rehearse,
Consuméd have and wasted my redness. 545
Now take heed of this canon's cursedness.
"Sir, quod the canon, let your yeoman gone
For quicksílver, that we it had anon,
And let him bringen ounces two or three,
And when he cometh as fasté shall ye see 550
A wonder thing, which ye saw ne'er ere this."
"Sir, quod the priest, it shall be done ywis."[8]
He bade his servant fetchen him this thing,
And he all ready was at his bidding,
And went him forth, and came anon again 555
With this quicksílver, shortly for to sain,
And took these ounces three to the canón,
And he them laidé well and fair adown,
And bade the servant coalés for to bring,
That he anon might go to his working. 560
The coalés right anon werén yfet,[9]
And this canón took out a crossélet[10]
Of his bosom, and show'd it to the priest.
"This instrument, quod he, which that thou seest

[1] Sely—simple, innocent. [2] Covetise—covetousness. [3] Blent—warped, shrunk. [4] Wrenches—stratagems. [5] Conning—knowledge. [6] Ween—think. [7] Algates—at least, at all events. [8] Ywis—certainly. [9] Yfet—fetched. [10] Crosselet—crucible.

And took his leave, and wenté forth his way;
And at the thirdé day brought his money,
And to the priest he took his gold again,
Whereof this priest was wonder glad and fain. 480
"Certés, quod he, nothing annoyeth me
To lend a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what thing were in my possessión,
When he so true is of conditión
That in no wise he breaken will his day; 485
To such a man I can nevér say nay."
"What? quod this canon, should I be untrue?
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Truth is a thing that I will ever keep,
Unto the day in which that I shall creep 490
Into my grave, and ellés God forbid!
Believeth this as siker[2] as your creed.
God thank I, and in good time be it said,
That there n'as never man yet evil' apaid
For gold ne silver that he to me lent, 495
Ne never falsehood in mine heart I meant.
"And, Sir, quod he, now of my privity,
Since ye so goodly have been unto me,
And kithéd[3] to me so great gentleness,
Somewhat to quiten with your kindéness 500
I will you show, and if you lust to lere,[4]
I will you teachen pleinly[5] the mannere
How I can worken in philosophy:
Taketh good heed, ye shall well see at eye
That I will do a mastery ere I go." 505
"Ye? quod the priest, ye, Sir, and will ye so?
Marry, thereof I pray you heartily."
"At your commandément, Sir, truely,
Quod the canón, and ellés God forbid."
Lo, how this thiefé could his service bede.[6] 510
Full soth[7] it is that such profér'd servíce
Stinketh, as witnessen these oldé wise,
And that full soon I will it verify
In this canón, root of all treachery,
That evermore delight hath and gladness 515
(Such fiendly thoughtés in his heart empress)
How Christés people he may to mischief bring:
God keep us from his false dissimuling!
Naught wist this priest with whom that he dealt,
Nor of his harm-coming nothing he felt. 520

[1] All of the new—all freshly. [2] Siker—surely. [3] Kithed—shown. [4] Lust to lere—desire to learn. [5] Pleinly—fully. [6] Bede—order. [7] Soth—true.

Was not made there, but it was made before;
And other thingés I shall tell you more
Hereafterward which that he with him brought;
Ere he came there, him to beguile he thought,
And so he did ere that they went atwin;[1] 615
Till he had turnéd him could he not blin.[2]
It dulleth me when that I of him speak;
On his falsehood fain would I me awreak[3]
If I wist how; but he is here and there:
He is so variant he abit[4] no where. 620
But taketh heed, Sirs, now, for Goddés love.
He took his coal, of which I spake above,
And in his hand he bare it privily,
And whilés the priest couchéd busily
The coalés, as I told you ere this, 625
This canon saidé; "Friend, ye do amiss;
This is not couchéd[5] as it ought to be,
But soon I shall amenden it, quod he.
Now let me meddle therewith but awhile,
For of you have I pity by Saint Gile. 630
Ye be right hot; I see well how ye sweat;
Have here a cloth and wipe away the wet."
And whilés that the priest wipéd his face,
This canon took his coal with sorry grace,
And layéd it above on the midward 635
Of the crossélet, and blew well afterward,
Till that the coalés gonnen fast to bren.
"Now give us drinké," quod this canon, then,
"As swith[6] all shall be well I undertake:
Sitté we down, and let us merry make." 640
And whenné that this canon's beechen coal
Was burnt, all the limaile[7] out of the hole
Into the crossélet anon fell down;
And so it musté needés by reasón,
Since it above so even couchéd[8] was, 645
But thereof wist the priest nothíng, alas!
He deeméd all the coalés alike good,
For of the sleight[9] he nothing understood.
And when this alchemister saw his timé,
"Rise up, Sir Priest, quod he, and stand by me, 650
And for I woté well ingot have ye none,
Go'th, walketh forth, and bringeth a chalk stone,
For I will make it of the samé shape
That is an ingot, if I may have hap:

[1] Atwin — asunder. [2] Blin — cease. [3] Me awreak — revenge myself. [4] Abit — abideth. [5] Couched — laid. [6] Swith — speedily. [7] Limaile — filings. [8] Couched — laid, placed. [9] Sleight — trick, legerdemain.

Bring eke with you a bowl or else a pan
Full of water, and ye shall well see then
How that our business shall thrive and preve :[1]
And yet, for[2] ye shall have no misbelieve
Nor wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I will not be' out of your presénce, 660
But go with you, and come with you again."
The chamber dooré, shortly for to sain,
They openéd and shut, and went their way,
And forth with them they carriéd the key,
And came again withouten any delay. 665
What should I tarrien all the longé day?
He took the chalk, and shope it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shall you devise ;[3]
I say he took out of his owen sleeve
A teine[4] of silver (evil may he cheve)[5] 670
Which that ne was but a just ounce of weight :
And taketh heed now of his curséd sleight;
He shope his ingot in length and in brede
Of thilké teine,[4] withouten any drede,[6]
So slily that the priest it not espied, 675
And in his sleeve again he 'gan it hide,
And from the fire he took up his mattére,
And in the ingot it put with merry cheer,
And in the water-vessel he it cast
When that him list, and bade the priest as fast 680
Look what there is; "Put in thine hand and grope;
Thou shalt there finden silver, as I hope."
What, devil of hellé! should it ellés be?—
Shaving of silver, silver is pardé.
He put his hand in and took up a teine[4] 685
Of silver fine; and glad in every vein
Was this priest when he saw that it was so.
"Goddés blessing, and his mother's also,
And allé Hallows,[7] have ye, Sir Canón!
Saidé this priest; and their malison,[8] 690
But and[9] ye vouchésafe to teachen me
This noble craft and this subtility
I will be yours in all that ever I may."
Quod the canón, "Yet will I make essay
The second time, that ye may taken heed, 695
And be expert of this, and in your need
Another day essay in mine absénce
This discipline and this crafty sciénce.

[1] Preve—succeed. [2] For ye, &c.—in order that ye shall, &c. [3] Devise—describe. [4] Teine—a thin plate. [5] Cheve, Fr. *achever*—conclude. [6] Drede—doubt. [7] Hallows—saints. [8] Malison—curse. [9] But and, &c.—except.

Let take another ouncé, quod he tho,[1]
Of quícksilver, withouten wordés mo, 700
And do therewith as ye have done ere this
With that other which that now silver is."
The priest him busieth all that ever he can
To do as this canón, this curséd man,
Commandeth him, and fasté blew the fire 705
For to come to th' effect of his desire;
And this canón right in the meané while
All ready was this priest eft[2] to beguile;
And, for a countenance[3] in his hand bare
A hollow stické, (take keep[4] and beware) 710
In th' end of which an ouncé and no more
Of silver limailé[5] put was, as before
Was in his coal, and stoppéd with wax wele,
For to keep in his limaile every deal;[6]
And while this priest was in his business, 715
This canon with him stické 'gan him dress[7]
To him anon, and his powder cast in
As he did erst,[8] (the devil out of his skin
Him turn, I pray to God, for his falsehede,
For he was ever false in thought and deed,) 720
And with his stick above the crossélet,
That was ordainéd with that falsé get,[9]
He stirreth the coalés till relenten 'gan
The wax against the fire, as every man,
But he a fool be, wot well it must need, 725
And all that in the stické was out yede,[10]
And in the cross'let hastily it fell.
Now, goodé Sirs, what will ye bet[11] than well?
When that this priest was thus beguil'd again,
Supposing naught but truthé, sōth to sain,[12] 730
He was so glad that I can not express
In no mannére his mirth and his gladness,
And to the canon he proffer'd eftsoon
Body and good. "Yea, quod the canon, soon,
Though poor I be, crafty[13] thou shalt me find: 735
I warn thee well, yet is there more behind.
Is there any copper here within?" said he.
"Yea, Sir, quod the priest, I trow[14] there be."
"Ellés go buy us some, and that as swithé.[15]
Now, goodé Sir, go forth thy way and hie thee." 740

[1] Tho—then. [2] Eft—again. [3] Countenance—show, pretence. [4] Take keep—attend. [5] Limaile—filings. [6] Every deal—entirely. [7] Dress—apply. [8] Erst—before. [9] False get—cheating contrivance. [10] Yede—gone. [11] Bet—better. [12] Soth to sain—truth to say. [13] Crafty—skilful. [14] Trow—believe. [15] As swithe—as quickly as may be.

He went his way, and with the copper he came,
And this canón it in his handés name,[1]
And of that copper weighéd out an ounce.
Too simple is my tongué to pronounce,
As minister' of my wit, the doubleness 745
Of this canón, root of all cursedness:
He seeméd friendly to them that knew him naught,
But he was fiendly both in work and thought.
It wearieth me to tell of his falseness,
And nathéless yet will I it express, 750
To that intent men may beware thereby,
And for no other causé truély.
He put this copper into the crossélet,[2]
And on the fire as swithe[3] he hath it set,
And cast in powder, and made the priest to blow, 755
And in his working for to stoopen low
As he did erst, and all was but a jape;[4]
Right as him list[5] the priest he made his ape;
And afterward in the ingot he it cast,
And in the panné put it at the last 760
Of water, and in he put his owen hand:
And in his sleeve, as ye beforén-hand
Heard me tell, he had a silver teine;[6]
He slily took it out, this cursed heine,[7]
(Unweeting[8] this priest of his falsé craft) 765
And in the pannés bottom he it laft,
And in the water rombleth to and fro,
And wonder privily took up also
The copper teine, (not knowing thilké[9] priest)
And hid it, and him henté[10] by the breast, 770
And to him spake, and thus said in his game;
"Stoopeth adown; by God ye be to blame;
Helpeth me now, as I did you whilere:[11]
Put in your hand, and looketh what is there."
This priest took up this silver teine anon; 775
And thenné said the canon, "Let us gone
With these three teinés which that we have wrought
To some goldsmith, and wete[12] if they be aught,
For by my faith I n'oldé[13] for my hood
But if they weren silver fine and good, 780
And that as swithe[14] well provéd shall it be."
Unto the goldsmith with these teinés three

[1] Name—took. [2] Crosselet—crucible. [3] As swithe—as quickly as may be. [4] Jape—trick. [5] Him list—he pleased. [6] Teine—thin piece of metal. [7] Heine—wretch: the noun of which our adjective heinous is derived. [8] Unweeting — unsuspecting. [9] Thilke — this same. [10] Hente — held. [11] Whilere — before. [12] Wete — learn. [13] N'olde—would not. [14] As swithe—as soon as possible.

They went anon, and put them in assay
To fire and hammer: might no man say nay
But that they weren as they ought to be. 785
This sotted priest, who was gladdér than he?
Was never bird gladdér against the day,
Ne nightingale in the seasón of May
Was never none that list bettér to sing,
Ne lady lustier in carolling, 790
Or for to speak of love and womanhede,[1]
Nor knight in armés do a hardy deed
To stand in gracé of his lady dear,
Than had this priest this crafté for to lere;[2]
And to the canon thus he spake and said: 795
"For the love of God that for us allé dey'd,
And as I may deserve it unto you,
What shall this réceipt cost? tell'th me now."
"By our Lady, quod this canon, it is dear.
I warn you well, that save I and a frere, 800
In Engleland there can no man it make."
"No force,[3] quod he: now, Sir, for Goddés sake,
What shall I pay? telleth me I you pray."
"Ywis, quod he, it is full dear I say.
Sir, at one word, if that you list it have, 805
Ye shall pay forty pound, so God me save;
And n'ere[4] the friendship that ye did ere this
To me, ye shoulden payen more ywis."[5]
This priest the sum of forty pound anon
Of nobles fet[6] and took them evereach one 810
To this canón for this ilké receipt.
All his working n'as[7] but fraud and deceit.
"Sir Priest, he said, I keep[8] for to have no loss
Of my craft, for I would it were kept close,
And, as ye love me, keepeth it secree, 815
For if men knewen all my subtlety,
By God they woulden have so great envý
To me, because of my philosophy,
I should be dead, there were no other way."
"God it forbid, quod the priést, what ye say: 820
Yet had I lever[9] spenden all the good
Which that I have (and ellés were I wood)[10]
Than that ye should fallen in such mischíef."
"For your good will, Sir, have ye right good prefe,[11]
Quod the canón; and farewell, *grand mercy*." 825
He went his way, and never the priest him sey[12]

[1] Womanhede—womanly virtues. [2] Lere—learn. [3] No force—no matter. [4] N'ere—were it not. [5] Ywis—surely. [6] Fet—fetched. [7] N'as—was not. [8] Keep—take care. [9] Lever—rather. [10] Wood—mad. [11] Prefe—proof. [12] Sey—saw.

After that day. And when that this priest should
Maken essay, at such time as he would,
Of this receipt, farewell! it n'old[1] not be.
Lo, thus bejapéd[2] and beguil'd was he; 830
Thus maketh he his introductión
To bringen folk to their destructión.
Considereth, Sirs, how that in each estate
Betwixen men and gold there is debate,
So farforth that unnethés[3] is there none. 835
This multiplying[4] so blint[5] many one,
That in good faith I trowé that it be
The causé greatest of such scarcity.
These philosóphers speak so mistily
In this craft that men cannot come thereby 840
For any wit that men have nowadays:
They may well chatteren as do these jays,
And in their termés set their lust and peine,[6]
But to their purpose shall they ne'er attain.
A man may lightly learn, if he have aught, 845
To multiply and bring his good to naught.
Lo, such a lucre is in this lusty[7] game,
A mannés mirth it will turn all to grame,[8]
And emptien also great and heavy purses,
And maken folk for to purchásen curses 850
Of them that have thereto their good ylent.
O, fy for shame! they that have been brent,[9]
Alas! can they not flee the firés heat?
Ye that it use I rede[10] that ye it lete,[11]
Lest ye lose all; for bet than never is late: 855
Never to thriven were too long a date:
Though ye prowl aye ye shall it never find;
Ye be as bold as is Bayard the blind,
That blundereth forth, and peril casteth none;[12]
He is as bold to run against a stone 860
As for to go besidés in the way:
So faren ye that multiply,[13] I say.
If that your eyen cannot see aright,
Looketh that your mind lack not his sight,
For though ye look never so broad and stare 865
Ye shall not win a mite on that chaffare,[14]
But wasten all that ye may rape and renne.[15]
Withdraw the fire lest it too fasté brenne;

[1] N'old—would not. [2] Bejaped—tricked, befooled. [3] Unnethes—scarcely. [4] Multiplying — making gold, &c. [5] Blint — stops. [6] Lust and peine — delight and trouble. [7] Lusty — pleasant. [8] Grame — sorrow. [9] Brent—burnt. [10] Rede—advise. [11] Lete—leave. [12] Peril casteth none—perceives no danger. [13] Multiply—make gold, &c. [14] Chaffare—traffick. [15] Rape and renne—"rap-and-rend," seize and plunder.

Meddleth no moré with that art I mean,
For if ye do your thrift [1] is gone full clean : 870
And right as swithe [2] I will you tellen here
What philosóphers say in this mattere.
Lo, thus saith Arnold of the newé town,
As his Rosáry maketh mentión ;
He saith right thus, withouten any lie, 875
"There may no man mercúry mortify,[3]
But it be with his brother's knowleching." [4]
Lo, how that he which firsté said this thing
Of philosóphers' father was, Hermes ;
He saith how that the dragon doubteless 880
Ne dieth not but if that he be slain
With his brother ; and this is for to sain,
By the dragon, Mercúry, and no other
He understood, and Brimstone by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were ydraw. 885
"And therefore, said he, take heed to my saw : [5]
Let no man busy him this art to seech,[6]
But if that he the intentión and speech
Of philosóphers understanden can,
And if he do, he is a lewéd man ; [7] 890
For this sciénce and this conníng (quod he)
Is of the secree of secrées pardé."
Also there was a disciple of Plato
That on a timé said his master to,
As his book Senior will bear witness, 895
And this was his demand in sothfastness,[8]
"Tell me the name of thilké [9] privy stone,"
And Plato answer'd unto him anon ;
"Také the stone that Titanos men name."
"Which is that?" quod he. "Magnetia is the same,"
Saidé Plató. "Yea, Sir, and is it thus? 901
This is *ignotum per ignotius.*
What is magnetia, good Sir, I pray?"
"It is a water that is made, I say,
Of th' elementés fouré," quod Plató. 905
"Tell me the rooté, good Sir, quod he tho,[10]
Of that water, if that it be your will."
"Nay, nay, quod Plato, certain that I n'ill : [11]

[1] Thrift—thriving, success. [2] Swithe—quickly. [3] Mortify—destroy. [4] But it be, &c.—"without the knowledge of its brother." [5] Saw—saying. [6] Seech—seek. [7] Lewed—ignorant. [8] Sothfastness—truth. [9] Thilke—this. [10] Tho—then. [11] N'ill—will not.

V. 892. *the secree of secrees.*] He alludes to a treatise entitled *Secreta Secretorum*, which was supposed to contain the sum of Aristotle's instructions to Alexander.—*Tyr.*

The philosóphers were sworné evereach one
That they ne should discover it unto none, 910
Ne in no book it write in no mannére,
For unto God it is so lefe [1] and dear,
That he will not that it discovered be,
But where it liketh to his deity
Man for to inspire, and eke for to defend [2] 915
Whom that him liketh; lo, this is the end."
Then thus conclude I; since that God of heaven
Ne will not that the philosóphers neven [3]
How that a man shall come unto this stone,
I rede [4] as for the best to let it gone; 920
For whoso maketh God his adversáry,
As for to worken any thing in contráry
Of his will, certés never shall he thrive,
Though that he multiply term of his live.[5]
And there a point,[6] for ended is my Tale. 925
God send every good man bote of his bale! [7]

[1] Lefe—beloved. [2] Defend—forbid. [3] Neven—name. [4] Rede—recommend. [5] Multiply, &c. — make gold to his life's end. [6] There a point—there is a conclusion. [7] Bote of his bale—remedy for, or end of, his sorrow. The Glossary derives bote from the Saxon: may it not, however, be of Norman derivation, — *but*, the end, conclusion; whence the word *butt*, used in archery?

TROILUS AND CRESEIDA

AND

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

"For, if ye wist how sore it doth me smart,
Ye wouldé cease of this; for God thou wo'st
The puré spirit yweepeth in my heart
To see you weepen which that I love most."—b. iv. l. 1016.

TROILUS AND CRESEIDA.

IN FIVE BOOKS.

BOOK I.

THE double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
That was the King Priámus' son of Troy;
In loving how his áventurés fell
From woe to weal, and after out of joy,
My purpose is ere that I parté fro'y.[1]
Thou Thesiphone! thou helpé me t'indite
This woful verse, that weepen as I write. 7

* * * * *

[1] Fro'y—from you.

Troilus and Creseida.] In this excellent book is shown the fervent love of Troilus to Creseida, whom he enjoyed for a time, and her great untruth to him again in giving herself to Diomedes, who n the end did so cast her off that she came to great misery. In which discourse Chaucer liberally treateth of the divine purveyance. —*Urry.*

It is well wist[1] how that the Greekés strong
In armés with a thousand shippés went
To Troié wardés,[2] and the city long
Besiegeden, nigh ten years ere they stent,[3]
And how in divers wise and one intent,
The ravishing to wreak[4] of Queen Helen,
By Paris done, they wroughten all their pain.[5] 14

Now fell it so that in the town there was
Dwelling a lord of great authority,
A great divine, that clepéd was Calcas,
That in that science so' éxpert was, that he
Knew well that Troiè should destroyéd be
By answer of his god, that hight was thus
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus. 21

So when this Calcas knew by calculing,
And eke by th' answer of this god Apollo,
That Greekés shoulden such a people bring
Thorough the which that Troy must be fordo,[6]
He cast anon out of the town to go,
For well he wist by sorte[7] that Troié sholde
Destroyéd be, yea, would who so or n'olde;[8] 28

Wherefóre for to departen softély
Took purpose full this wight, foreknowing, wise,
And to the Greekés host full privily
He stole anon; and they in courteous wise
Diden to him both worship and servíce,
In trust that he hath conning them to rede[9]
In every peril which that was to dread. 35

Great rumour rose when it was first espied
In all the town, and openly was spoken
That Calcas traitor fled was, and allied
To them of Greece; and cast was to be wroken[10]
On him that falsely hath his faith to-broken,
And said that he and all his kin at once
Were worthy to be burnt both fell[11] and bones. 42

Now had this Calcas left in this mischance,
Unknowing of this false and wicked deed,
A daughter which that was in great penánce,[12]

[1] Wist—known. [2] To Troie wardes—towards Troy. [3] Stent—ceased. [4] To wreak—to revenge the ravishing. [5] All their pain—underwent, or, performed all their labour. [6] Fordo—fordone, ruined, destroyed. [7] Sorte—lot, destiny. [8] Would who so or n'olde—whoever would or would not. [9] Conning them to rede—wisdom to direct them. [10] To be wroken—a plot, or, contrivance was to be wreaked. [11] Fell—skin. [12] Penance—sorrow.

And of her life she was full sore in dread,
And ne wist never what best was to rede;[1]
And as a widow was she, and alone,
And n'ist[2] to whom she might ymake her moan. 49

Creseida was this lady's name aright;
As to my doom[3] in all Troyés city
Most fairest lady, passing every wight;
So angeliké shone her native beauty,
That like a thing immortal seeméd she,
And therewith was she so perfect a creatúre
As she' had[4] been made in scorning of Natúre. 56

This lady, which that all day heard at ear
Her father's shame, his falsehood, and treasón,
Full nigh out of her wit for sorrow' and fear,
In widow's habit large, of samite[5] brown,
Before Hectór on knees she fell adown,
His mercy bade, her selfen excusing
With piteous voice, and tenderly weeping. 63

Now was this Hector piteous of natúre,
And saw that she was sorrowful begone,
And that she was so fair a creáture;
Of his goodness he gladed her anon,
And saidé; "Let your father's treason gone
Forth with mischance, and ye yourself in joy
Dwelleth with us whilés you list in Troy; 70

"And all the honour men may do you have,[6]
As farfórth as though your father dwelt here,
Ye shall have, and your body shall men save,
As far as I may aught enquire and hear."
And she him thankéd with full humble cheer,[7]
And ofter would, and it had been his will,
And took her leave, went home, and held her still. 77

And in her house she' abode with such meiné[8]
As till her honour[9] need was for to hold;
And whilé she was dwelling in that cityé
She kept her staté, and of young and old
Full well belov'd, and well men of her told;
But whether that she children had or none
I read it not, therefore I let it gone. 84

The thingés fellen, as they do of war,
Betwixen them of Troy and Greekés oft,
For some days boughten they of Troy it dear,

[1] Rede—advise. [2] N'ist—ne wist, knew not. [3] Doom—judgment. [4] As she had—as though she had. [5] Samite—rich silk. [6] Do you have—cause you to have. [7] Cheer—countenance [8] Meine—attendants. [9] Till her honour—to, or for, her honour.

And eft[1] the Greekés founden nothing soft
The folk of Troy: and thus Fortúne aloft
And under eft 'gan them to whelmen both,
After her course,[2] aye while that they were wroth. 91

But how this town came to destructión
Ne falleth not to purpose me to tell;
For why? it were a long digressión
From my matter, and you too long to dwell;
But the Trojan gestés,[3] all as they fell
In Homer, or in Dares, or in Dite,[4]
Whoso that can may read them as they write. 98

But though the Greekés them of Troy in-shetten,
And their city besiegéd all about,
Their old uságes n'olden they not letten,[5]
As to honóuren their goddés full devout,
But aldermost[6] in honour out of doubt
They had a relick hight Palladion,
That was their trust aboven evereach one. 105

And so befell, when comen was the time
Of Aprilis, when clothéd is the mead
With newé green, of lusty Ver[7] the prime,
And with sweet smelling flow'rés white and red
In sundry wisé show'd, as I you rede,[8]
The folk of Troy their óbservances old,
Palladionés feast, went for to hold. 112

Unto the temple' in all their besté wise
In general went every manner wight
To hearken of Palladion's servíce,
And namely many a lusty knight,
And many' a lady fresh and maiden bright;
Full well beseen the most meiné[9] and least
Both for the season and for the highé feast. 119

Among these other folk was Creseida,
In widow's habit black; but nathéless
Right as our first letter is now an A,
In beauty first so stood she makéless;[10]
Her goodly looking gladded all the press;[11]
N'as[12] never seen thing to be praised so dear,
Nor under cloudé black so bright a star 126

[1] Eft—afterwards. [2] After her course—according to her course, or plan. [3] Gestes—histories. [4] Dares, Dite, (*Dyctus Cretensis*)—historians of the Trojan war. Mr. Tyrwhitt says, "supposed historians." [5] Not letten—they would not forego their old customs. [6] Aldermost — first, chiefly. [7] Ver — spring. [8] Rede — inform. [9] Meine — attendants. [10] Makeless — peerless. [11] Press — crowd. [12] N'as—ne was, there never was.

As was Creseid', they saiden evereach one
That her behelden in her blacké weed;
And yet she stood full low and still alone,
Behind all other folk, in little brede,[1]
And nigh the door, aye under shamés drede,
Simple' of attire, and debonaire of cheer,[2]
With full assuréd looking and mannére. 133

Dan Troilus, as he was wont to guide
His youngé knightés, led them up and down
In thilké large temple' on every side,
Beholding aye the ladies of the town
Now here now there, for no devotión
Had he to none to reven[3] him his rest,
But 'gan to praise and lacken whom he lest.[4] 140

And in his walk full fast he 'gan to waiten[5]
If knight or squiér of his company
'Gan for to sike,[6] or let his eyen baiten[7]
On any woman that he could espy;
Then he would smile, and hold it a follý,
And say him thus; "O Lord! she sleepeth soft
For love of thee, when thou turnest full oft. 147

"I have heard tell pardieu of your living,
Ye lovers, and of your lewd[8] observance,
And which a labour folk have in winning
Of love, and in the keeping which doubtance,[9]
And when your prey is lost, woe and penance.
O very foolés! blind and nice[10] be ye,
There is not one can 'ware[11] by other be." 154

And with that word he 'gan cast up his brow,
Ascaunce[12] "Lo! is this not wisely spoken?"
At which the god of Love 'gan looken row[13]
Right for despite, and shope him to be wroken;[14]
He kid[15] anon his bow was not to-broken,
For suddenly he hit him at the full;
And yet as proud a peacock can he pull. 161

O blindé world! O blind intentión!
How often falleth all th' effect contráire
Of surquedry[16] and foul presumptión?

[1] In little brede—in small space. [2] Debonaire of cheer—gentle of demeanour. [3] Reven — break. [4] Lacken whom he lest — find fault with whom he chose. [5] Waiten — watch. [6] Sike — sigh. [7] Baiten—batten, feed. [8] Lewd—foolish, ignorant. [9] Doubtance —doubt. [10] Nice—silly. [11] Ware—warned. [12] Ascaunce—as much as to say. See note *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, p. 310. [13] Row —rough, cross. [14] Shope him to be wroken—shaped, or, prepared to be revenged on him. [15] Kid—showed. [16] Surquedry—pride.

For caught is proud and caught is debonaire ;[1]
This Troilus is clomben on the stair,
And little weeneth that he must descend ;
But all day faileth thing that foolés ween'd.[2] 168

As proud Bayard beginneth for to skip
Out of the way (so pricketh him his corn)
Till he a lash have of the longé whip,
Then thinketh he, though I prance all beforne
First in the trace, full fat and new ishorn,
Yet am I but a horse, and horse's law
I must endure, and with my ferés[3] draw : 175

So far'd it by this fierce and proudé knight ;
Though he a worthy kingés sonné were,
And weenéd that nothíng had had such might
Against his will that should his hearté stir,
Yet with a look his heart ywoxe on fire,
That he that now was most in pride above
Woxe suddenly most subject unto love. 182

Forthy[4] example taketh of this man
Ye wisé, proud, and worthy folkés all,
To scornen Love, which that so sooné can
The freedom of your heartés to him thrall ;[5]
For ever was, and ever shall befall
That Love is he that all thingés may bind,
For no man may fordo the law of kind.[6] 189

That this be soth hath provéd and doth yet,
For this (trow[7] I) ye knowen all and some,
Men readen not[8] that folk have greater wit
Than they that have been most with love inome,[9]
And strongest folk been therewith overcome,
The worthiest and greatest of degree ;
This was and is, and yet man shall it see. 196

And truély it sit well to be so,
For alderwisest[10] have therewith been pleaséd,
And they that have been aldermost[11] in woe
With love have been comfórted most and easéd,
And oft it hath the cruel heart appeaséd,
And worthy folk made worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreaden vice and shame. 203

[1] Debonaire—gentle, meek. [2] Fooles ween'd—but every day that which fools imagined, fails. [3] Feres—companions. [4] Forthy—therefore. [5] Thrall—enslave. [6] Law of kind—no man can frustrate, or do away, the law of nature. [7] Trow—believe. [8] Readen not—do not learn, or know. [9] Inome—taken. [10] Alderwisest—the wisest of all. [11] Aldermost—most of all.

Now sith it may not goodly be withstond,[1]
And is a thing so virtuous in kind,[2]
Ne grudgeth naught to Love for to been bond,
Sith, as him selven list,[3] he may you bind;
The yard is bette that bowen will and wind[4]
Than that that brest; and therefore I you rede[5]
Followeth him that so well can you lead. 210

But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kingés son of which I told,
And leaven other thing collateral,
Of him think I my talé forth to hold,
Both of his joy and of his carés cold,
And all his work as touching this mattér,
For I it 'gan, I will thereto refer. 217

Within the temple went him forth playing,
This Troilus, with every wight about,
On this lady and now on that looking,
Whe'rso[6] she were of town or of without;
And upon case[7] befel that through a rout[8]
His eyé piercéd, and so deep it went
Till on Creseid' it smote, and there it stent,[9] 224

And suddenly for wonder wax'd astonied,
And 'gan her bet[10] behold in thrifty wise;[11]
"O mercy, God! thought he, where hast thou wonnéd,[12]
That art so fair and goodly to devise?[13]
Therewith his heart began to spread and rise,
And soft he sighéd, lest men might him hear,
And caught again his former playing cheer.[14] 231

She n'as not with the most of her statúre,[15]
But all her limbés so well answering
Weren to womanhood, that creáture

[1] Withstond—withstood. [2] Kind—nature. [3] Himselven list—since as he himself pleases. [4] Wind—the stick is better that will bend and twist, than that which breaks. [5] Rede—advise. [6] Whe'rso—whether so. [7] Upon case, (Fr. idiom)—by chance. [8] Rout—crowd. [9] Stent—remained. [10] Bet—better. [11] Thrifty wise—careful manner. [12] Wonned—dwelt. [13] Devise—describe. [14] Cheer—demeanour. [15] Of her stature—she was not among the tallest of stature.*

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* The editions of 1561 and 1598, both have this line,

"She n'as not with the *most* of her stature;"

and this reading I have ventured to adopt, as answering better to the context. The copy from which this edition has been printed (Urry's) has not the character of being verbally the most correct with the best MSS.; indeed, Mr. Tyrwhitt asserts that he (Urry) has taken unwarrantable liberties with the text.

Was never lessé mannish [1] in seeming,
And eke the puré wise [2] of her meaning
She showéd well, that men might in her guess
Honóur, estate, and womanly nobless. 238

Then Troilus right wonder well withal
'Gan for to like her meaning and her cheer,
Which somedeal deignous [3] was, for she let fall
Her look a littl' aside, in such mannére
Ascaunces, [4] "What! may I not standen here?"
And after that her looking 'gan she light; [5]
That never thought him see so good a sight. 245

And of her look in him there 'gan to quicken
So great desire and such affectión,
That in his heartés bottom 'gan to sticken
Of her his fix'd and deep impressíon;
And though he erst had poréd up and down,
Then was he glad his hornés in to shrink;
Unnethes wist [6] he how to look or wink. 252

Lo! he that let him selven so cunning,[7]
And scornéd them that lovés painés drien,[8]
Was full unware that Love had his dwelling
Within the subtle streamés of her eyen,
That suddenly him thought that he felt dien
Right with her look the spirit in his heart:
Blesséd be Love, that thus can folk convert! 259

She thus in black, looking to Troilus,
Over all thing he stood for to behold,
But his desire, ne wherefore he stood thus,
He neither cheeré made [9] nor wordé told,
But from afar, his manner for to hold,[10]
On other thing sometimes his look he cast,
And eft [11] on her, while that the service last. 266

And after this, not fully all awhapéd,[12]
Out of the temple easily he went,
Repenting him that ever he had japéd [13]
Of Lovés folk, lest fully the descent
Of scorn fell on himself; but what he meant [14]

[1] Mannish — masculine. [2] Pure wise — the very manner of her meaning. [3] Somedeal deignous—a little disdainful. [4] Ascaunces —as if to say. See note *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, p. 310. [5] Light —lighten, clear up. [6] Unnethes wist—scarcely knew he how, &c. [7] So cunning—that allows himself so clever. [8] Drien—endure. [9] Cheer made—gave any sign, or appearance. [10] Manner for to hold — to preserve his consistency. [11] Eft — afterwards. [12] Awhaped — stupefied. [13] Japed — jested. [14] What he meant—. but, for fear that what he meant were in any way known abroad.

Lest it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he 'gan dissimulen and hide. 273

When he was from this temple thus departed,
He straight anon unto his palace turneth;
Right with her look thorough shotten and darted;
All feigned he in lust[1] that he sojóurneth,
And all his cheer and speech also he burneth,
And aye of Lovés servants every while,
Himself to wry, at them he 'gan to smile, 280

And said; "Ah, Lord! so ye live all in lust,
Ye lovers, for the cunningest of you,
That serveth most intentively and best,
Him tite as often harm thereof as prow;[2]
Your hire is quit again, yea, God wot how,
Not well for well, but scorn for good servíce;
In faith your order is ruléd in good wise. 287

"In no certáin[3] be your observances,
But it in a few sely[4] pointés be,
Ne nothing asketh so great attendances
As doth your lay,[5] and that knowen all ye;
But that is not the worst, as may I the,[6]
But told I which were the worst point, I leave,
All said I soth,[7] ye woulden at me grieve. 294

"But take this; that ye lovers oft eschew,
Or ellés do of good intentión,
Full oft thy lady will it misconstrúe,
And deem it harm in her opinión;
And yet if she for other encheson[8]
Be wroth, then shalt thou have a groin[9] anon:
Lord! well is he that may be of you one!" 301

But for all this, when that he seeth his time,
He held his peace, no other bote[10] him gainéd,
For Love began his feathers so to lime,
That well unneth[11] unto his folk he feignéd
That other busy needés him distrainéd:[12]
So woe was he that what to do he n'ist,[13]
But bade his folk to go where as them list.[14] 308

And when that he in chamber was alone
He down upon his beddés feet him set,

[1] Lust—pleasure, delight. [2] As prow—as much harm as profit often betides him. [3] Certain — (for) certainty. [4] Sely — simple. [5] Lay—order, profession. [6] As may I the—as I may thrive. [7] All said I soth — although I spoke truly. [8] Encheson — occasion. [9] Groin — a discontented lip. [10] Bote — end, (Fr. *but*). [11] Well unneth — scarcely. [12] Distrained — that other urgent matters pressed upon him. [13] N'ist—ne wist, knew not. [14] Them list—they pleased.

And first he 'gan to sike and eft[1] to groan,
And thought aye on her so withouten let,[2]
That as he sat and woke, his spirit met[3]
That he her saw and temple'; and all the wise[4]
Right of her look, and 'gan it new avise.[5] 315

Thus 'gan he make a mirror of his mind,
In which he saw all wholly her figúre,
And that he well could in his heart yfind
It was to him a right good áventure
To love such one, and if he did his cure[6]
To serven her, yet might he fall in grace,
Or else for one of her servántés pass: 322

Imagining that ne travále nor grame[7]
Ne might for so goodly a one be lorn,[8]
As she, nor him for his desire no shame,
Al' were it wist,[9] but in praise and upborne
Of allé lovers, well more than beforne.
Thus argumented he in his 'ginning,
Full unadvised of his woe coming. 329

* * * * *

In him ne deignéd to sparen blood royal
The fire of love, wherefrom may God me bless!
Ne him forbare in no degree for all
His virtue or his excellent prowéss,
But held him as his thrall[10] low in distress,
And brende[11] him so in sundry wise aye new,
That sixty times a day he lost his hue. 336

So muchell day from day his owné thought
For lust to her 'gan quicken and increase,
That evereach other charge[12] he set at naught;
Forthý[13] full often, his hot fire to cease,
To see her goodly look he 'gan to press,
For thereby to be eased well he ween'd,[14]
And aye the nerre[15] he was, the more he brende;[16] 343

* * * * *

Eke of the day there passed not an hour
But to himself a thousand times he said,
"God goodly, to whom I servé and labóur

[1] Eft—afterwards. [2] Let—ceasing. [3] Met—dreamed, fancied. [4] Wise—manner. [5] Avise—consider. [6] Did his cure—took care, used his diligence. [7] Grame—grief. [8] Lorn—lost. [9] Al' were it wist—although it were known. [10] Thrall—prisoner, bond-man. [11] Brende—burneth. [12] Charge—duty. [13] Forthy—therefore. [14] Ween'd—thought. [15] Nerre—nearer. [16] Brende—burnt.

As best I can, now would to God, Creseid',
Ye woulden on me rue ere that I died;
My dearé heart, alas! my hele,[1] and hue,[2]
And life, is lost but ye will on me rue.[3] 350

All other dreadés weren from him fled
Both of th' assiege and his salvatión,[4]
Ne' in his desire no other fancy bred
But arguments to this conclusión,
That she on him would have compassión,
And he to be her man while he may dure;
Lo here his life, and from his death his cure.[5] 357

The sharpé show'rés fell, of armés preve[6]
That Hector or his other brethren diden,
Ne made him only therefore onés meve,[7]
And yet was he, where so men went or ridden,
Found one the best, and longest time abiden
There[8] peril was, and eke did such travail
In armés that to think it was marvail. 364

But for no hate he to the Greekés had,
Ne also for the rescue of the town,
Ne made him thus in armés for to mad,[9]
But only lo! for this conclusión,
To liken[10] her the bet for his renown:
From day to day in armés so he sped
That all the Greekés as the death him dread. 371

And from this forth then reft him love his sleep,
And made his meat his foe; and eke his sorrow
'Gan multiply, that who so tooké keep,[11]
It showéd in his hue both even' and morrow,
Therefore a title he 'gan him to borrow,
Of other sickness, lest men of him ween'd
That the hot fire of cruel love him brend;[12] 378

And said, he by a fever far'd amiss:
But how it was, certáin I cannot say,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feignéd her she n'ist,[13] one of the twa;
But well read I, that by no manner way
Ne seeméd it as if she on him raught,[14]
Or of his pain, whatsoever he thought. 385

But then yfelt this Troilus such woe
That he was well nigh wood;[15] for aye his dread

[1] Hele—health. [2] Hue—complexion. [3] Rue—have pity. [4] Salvation—safety. [5] Cure—preservation. [6] Preve—proof. [7] Meve—move. [8] There—where. [9] Mad—madden. [10] Liken her—please her the better. [11] Took keep—observed. [12] Brend—burned. [13] N'ist—ne wist, knew not. [14] Raught—cared. [15] Wood—mad.

Was this, that she some wight had lovéd so
That ne'er of him she would have taken heed,
For which him thought he felt his hearté bleed;
Ne of his woe ne durst he naught begin
To tellen her, for all this world to win. 392

But when he had a space left from his care,
Thus to himself full oft he 'gan to plain;
He said; "O fool! now art thou in the snare
That whilom japedést[1] at lovés pain;
Now art thou hent,[2] now gnaw thine owné chain:
Thou wert aye wont each lover reprehend
Of thing from which thou canst not thee defend. 399

"What will now every lover say of thee
If this be wist?[3] but e'er in thine absence
Laughen in scorn, and say, 'Lo! there go'th he;
That is the man of so great sapience,
That held us lovers least in reverence:
Now thankéd be God he may go on the dance
Of them, that Love list feebly to advance:' 406

"But O thou woful Troilus! God would
(Sith thou must loven through thy destiny)
That thou beset were of such one that should
Know all thy woe, all lacked her pitý![4]
But all so cold in love towardés thee
Thy lady is, as frost in winter moon,
And thou fordone,[5] as snow in fire is soon. 413

"God would I were arrivéd in the port
Of death, to which my sorrow will me lead!
Ah, Lord! to me it were a great comfórt;
Then were I quit of languishing in dread,
For by my hidd'n sorrow iblown in brede[6]
I shall bejapéd[7] be a thousand time
More than that fool of whose follý men rhyme. 420

"But now help God, and ye my sweet, for whom
I plain; icaught ye never wight so fast:
O mercy, my dear heart! and help me from
The death, for I while that my life may last
More than my life will love you to my last;
And with some friendly look gladdéth me, sweet!
Though never nothing more ye me behete."[8] 427

These wordés and full many' another mo
He spake, and calléd ever in his plaint

[1] Japedest—jokedst. [2] Hent—caught. [3] Wist—known, accustomed. [4] All lacked her pity—wholly wanting her pity. [5] Fordone—undone. [6] Iblown in brede—blown abroad. [7] Bejaped—befooled. [8] Behete—promise.

Her name, to tellen unto her his woe,
Till nigh that he in salté tears was dreint:[1]
All was for naught; she heard not his complaint;
And when that he bethought on that follý,
A thousand fold his woe 'gan multiply. 434

Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his, that calléd was Pandare,
Came onés in unware, and heard him groan,
And saw his friend in such distress and care;
"Alas! (quod he) who causeth all this fare?
O mercy God! what unhap may this mean?
Have now thus soon the Greekés made you lean? 441

"Or hast thou some remorse of consciénce?
And art now fall in some devotión,
And wailest for thy sin and thine offence,
And hast, forfear'd,[2] ycaught contritión?
God save them that besiegéd have our town,
That so can lay our jollity on press,[3]
And bring our lusty folk to holiness!" 448

These wordes said he for the nonés all,[4]
That with such thing he might him angry maken,
And with his anger do his sorrow fall
As for a time, and his couráge awaken;
But well wist he, as far as tongués speaken,
There n'as a man of greater hardiness
Than he, ne more desired worthiness. 455

"What case[5] (quod Troilus) or what áventure
Hath guided thee to see me languishing,
That am refúse of every creáture?
But for the love of God, at my praying,
Go hence away, for certés my dying
Will thee disease,[6] and I must needés die,
Therefore go way; there is no more to say. 462

"But if thou ween[7] I be thus sick for dread,
It is not so, and therefore scorn me not;
There is another thing I take of heed
Well more than aught the Greekés have yet wrought,
Which cause is of my death for sorrow and thought;
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,[8]
Be thou not wroth; I hide it for the best." 469

[1] Dreint — drenched. [2] Forfear'd — terrified. [3] Our jollity on press—that so can press upon, or crush, our mirth. [4] For the nones all—all for the occasion. [5] Case—chance. [6] Disease—discomfort. [7] Ween—imagine. [8] Ne lest—but although I do not now wish to tell it you.

This Pandare, that nigh melt[1] for woe and ruth,
Full often said; "Alas! what may this be?
Now friend, (quod he) if ever love or truth
Hath been ere this betwixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never such a cruelty
To hiden from thy friend so great a care;
Wo'st[2] thou not well that it am I Pandare? 476

"I will partake with thee of all thy pain;
If it so be I do thee no comfórt,
As it is friendés right, soth for to sain,
To enterparten[3] woe as glad disport,
I have and shall; for true or false report,
In wrong and right, ylov'd thee all my live;
Hide not thy woe from me, but tell it blive."[4] 483

Then 'gan this sorrowful Troilus to sike,[5]
And said him thus; "God leave[6] it be my best
To tellen thee, for sith it may thee like,
Yet will I tell it thee, though my hearté brest,[7]
And well wot I thou may'st do me no rest;
But lest thou deem that I trust not to thee:
Now hearken friend, for thus it stant[8] with me. 490

"Lové, against the which who so defendeth
Him selven most, him alderleast[9] availeth,
With despair so sorely me offendeth
That straight unto the death mine heart yfaileth,
Thereto desire so burningly me' assaileth
That to be slain it were a greater joy
To me than king of Greece to be, and Troy. 497

"Sufficeth this, my fully friend Pandare,
That I have said, for now wot thou my woe,
And for the love of God, my coldé care
So hide it well, I told it ne'er to mo,[10]
For harmés mighten followen more than two
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnéss,
And let me starve unknown of my distress." 504

"How hast thou thus unkindély and long
Hid this from me, thou fool? (quod Pandarus)
Paráventure thou may'st for such one long,
That mine advice anon may helpen us."
"This were a wonder thing, (quod Troilus)
Thou couldest ne'er in love thy selfen wis,[11]
How devil may'st thou bringen me to bliss?" 511

[1] Melt—melted. [2] Wo'st—knowest thou. [3] Enterparten, &c.—to share woe equally with diversion. [4] Blive—quickly. [5] Sike—sigh. [6] Leave—grant. [7] Brest—burst. [8] Stant—stands. [9] Alderleast—least of all. [10] Mo—more. [11] Wis—direct.

"Yea, Troilus, now hearken (quod Pandare).
Though I be nice,[1] it happeth often so,
That one that of axés[2] doth full ill fare,
By good counsél can keep his friend therefro;
I have myself yseen a blind man go
There[3] as he fell which that could looken wide:
A fool may eke a wise man often guide. 518

* * * * *

"If God will thou art naught aghast[4] of me
Lest I would of thy lady thee beguile;
Thou wo'st[5] thyself whom that I love pardie,
As I best can, gone sithen[6] longé while,
And sith thou wo'st I do it for no wile,
And sith I am he that thou trusteth most,
Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wo'st." 525

Yet Troilus for all this no wordé said,
But long he lay as still as he dead were;
And after this, with siking he abraid,[7]
And to Pandárus' voice he lent his ear,
And up his eyen cast he; and then in fear
Was Pandarus lest that in a frenzý
He should yfall, or ellés sooné die; 532

* * * * *

[After a lengthy argument and persuasion on the part of Pandarus, for the purpose of persuading his friend to disclose the name of his love, in order that he may, if possible, forward his suit; he succeeds in winning the confidence of Troilus by declaring,

"Were it eke for my sister all thy sorrow.
By my good will she should be thine to-morrow."]

"Look up I say, and tell me what she is
Anon, that I may go about thy need.
Know I her aught? for my love tell me this,
Then would I hope the rather for to speed."
Then 'gan the vein of Troilus to bleed,
For he was hit, and wax'd all red for shame.
"Aha! (quod Pandare) here beginneth game." 539

And with that word he 'gan him for to shake,
And said him thus; "Thief, thou shalt her namé tell:"
But then 'gan sely[8] Troilus for to quake,
As though men should have had him into hell,
And said, "Alas! of all my woe the well,[9]
Then is my sweeté foe calléd Creseid';"
And well nigh with that word for fear he died. 546

[1] Nice — foolish. [2] Axes, (Fr. *accés*) — ague. [3] There — where. [4] Aghast—afraid. [5] Wo'st—knowest. [6] Sithen—since. [7] Abraid —awaked. [8] Sely—simple. [9] Well—spring.

And when that Pandare heard her namé neven,[1]
Lord! he was glad, and sayéd; "Friend so dear,
Now fare a-right, for Jovés name in heaven
Love hath beset thee well: be of good cheer,
For of good name, and wisdom, and mannére,
She hath enough, and eke of gentleness:
If she be fair thou wo'st[2] thyself I guess. 553

"Ne never saw I a more bounteous
Of her estate, ne gladder, ne of speech
A friendlier, ne none more gracióus
For to do well, ne less had need to seech
What for to do, and all this bet to eche[3]
In honour to as far as she may stretch:
A kingés heart seemeth by hers a wretch. 560

"And forthy[4] look of good comfórt thou be,
For certainly the firsté point is this
Of noble couráge, and well ordainé thee
A man to have peace with himself iwis;[5]
So oughtest thou, for naught but good it is
To loven well and in a worthy place;
Thee ought not to clepen it hap but grace.[6] 567

"And also think, and therewith gladden thee,
That sith thy lady virtuous is all,
So followeth it that there is some pitý
Amongés all these other in general,
And, for they see that thou in special
Requirest naught that is against her name,
For Virtue stretcheth not himself to shame. 573

"But well is me that ever I was born,
That thou beset art in so good a place;
For by my truth in love I durst have sworn
Thee should nevér have tidde so fair a grace;[7]
And wot' you why? for thou were wont to chase
At Love in scorn, and for despite him call
Saint Idiot, lordé of these foolés all. 580

"How often hast thou made thy nicé japes?[8]
And said that Lovés servants evereach one
Of nicety[9] be very goddés apes,
And some of them would munch their meat alone
Ligging[10] a-bed, and make them for to groan,

[1] Neven—named. [2] Wo'st, wottest—knowest. [3] Bet to eche—better to increase. [4] Forthy—therefore. [5] Iwis—certainly. [6] But grace—you ought not to call it chance but favour. [7] Fair a grace—so fair a fortune should never have happened to you. [8] Nice japes—silly jokes. [9] Nicety—folly. [10] Ligging—lying.

And some thou saidest had a blanch fevere,
And praidest God they should nevér kivére:[1] 587

"And some of them took on them for the cold
More than enough; so saidest thou full oft,
And some have feignéd often time, and told
How that they waken when they sleepen soft,
And thus they would have set them self aloft,
And nathéless were under at the last:
Thus saidest thou, and japedest full fast. 594

"Yet saidest thou that for the moré part
These lovers woulden speak in general,
And thoughten that it was a siker[2] art
For failing, for t' essayen over all:
Now may I jape of thee if that I shall;
But nathéless although that I should dey
Thou ne art none of those I dare well say. 601

"Now beat thy breast, and say to god of Love,
'Thy grace, O Lord! for now I me repent
If I misspake, for now myself I love;'
Thus say with all thy heart in good intent."
Quod Troilus, "Ah Lord! I me consent,
And pray to thee my japés[3] thou forgive,
And I no more will jape while that I live." 608

"Thou say'st well, (quod Pandáre) and now I hope
That thou the goddés wrath hast all appeaséd;
And sithen thou hast wepten many' a drop,
And said such thing wherewith thy god is pleaséd,
Now would God never but that thou were easéd,
And think well she of whom rest all thy woe,[4]
Hereafter may thy comfort be also. 615

"For thilké ground that beareth the weedés wick[5]
Bear'th eke these wholesome herbés as full oft,
And next to the foul nettle rough and thick
The rose ywaxeth sote,[6] and smooth, and soft,
And next the valley is the hill aloft,
And next the darké night is the glad morrow,
And also joy is next the fine[7] of sorrow. 622

"Now look that well attemper[8] be thy bridle,
And for the best aye suffer[9] to the tide,
Or ellés all our labour is on idle:[10]
He hasteth well that wisely can abide.
Be diligent and true, and aye well hide:

[1] Kivere—recover. [2] Siker—sure. [3] Jape—jest. [4] All thy woe—and think well that she in whom all your sorrow centres. [5] Wick—evil. [6] Sote—sweet. [7] Fine—end. [8] Attemper—temperate. [9] Suffer—submit. [10] On idle—in vain.

Be lusty free:[1] persévér in servíce,
And all is well if thou work in this wise: 629

"But he that parted is in every place,
Is no where whole, as writen clerkés wise;
What wonder is if such one have no grace?
Eke wo'st[2] thou how it far'th of some servíce?
As, plant a tree or herb in sundry wise,
And on the morrow pull it up as blive,[3]
No wonder is though it may never thrive. 636

"And sith the god of Love hath thee bestowéd
In placé digne unto thy worthiness,
Stand fast, for to a good port hast thou rowéd,
And of thy self for any heaviness
Hope alway well; for, but if dreariness,[4]
Or overhaste do both our labour shend[5]
I hope of this to maken a good end. 643

"And wo'st thou why? I am the less affearéd
Of this matter with my niecé for to treat;
For this have I heard say of wise and leréd,[6]
Was never man or woman yet beyete[7]
That was unapt to suffer[8] lovés heat
Celestial, or ellés love of kind;[9]
Forthy[10] some grace I hope in her to find. 650

"And for to speak of her in special,
Her beauty to bethinken and her youth,
It sit her not[11] to be celestial
As yet, though that her bothé list and couth;[12]
And truély it sit her well right nouth[13]
A worthy knight to loven and cherice,[14]
And, but she do,[15] I hold it for a vice. 657

"Wherefore I am, and will be aye readý
To painen[16] me to do you this servíce,
For both of you to pleasen; this hope I
Hereafterwardés, for ye be both wise,
And connen counsel keep in such a wise
That no man shall the wiser of it be;
And so we may be gladded allé three. 664

[1] Lusty free—full of pleasure, bounteous. [2] Wo'st—knowest. [3] Blive—quickly. [4] But if dreariness—unless sorrow. [5] Shend—ruin. [6] Lered—learned. [7] Beyete—begotten. [8] Suffer—endure. [9] Love of kind—love of the species. [10] Forthy—therefore. [11] Sit her not—suits her not. [12] List and couth—although she both chose and were able. [13] Nouth—now. [14] Cherice—cherish. [15] But she do—unless she do. [16] Painen me—exert myself.

"And, by my truth, I have right now of thee
A good conceit in my wit as I guess,
And what it is I will now that thou see;
I think that sithen[1] Love of his goodness
Hath thee converted out of wickedness,
That thou shalt be the besté post, I 'lieve,
Of all his lay,[2] and most his foén grieve.[3] 671

"Example why, see now these greaté clerks,
That erren aldermost[4] against all law,
And been converted from their wicked works
Through grace of God, that list them to him draw,
Then are they folk that have most God in awe,
And strongest faithéd be I understand,
And can an error alderbest[5] withstand." 678

When Troilus had heard Pandare assented
To be his help in loving of Creseid'
He wax'd of woe, as who saith, untormented,[6]
But hotter wax'd his love; and then he said
With sober cheer, as though his heart yplay'd,
"Now blissful Venus! help ere that I sterve.[7]
Of thee, Pandare, I now some thank[8] deserve. 685

"But, dearé friend, how shall my woe be less
Till this be done? and, good now, tell me this,
How wilt thou say of me and my distress,
Lest she be wroth? this dread I most iwis,[9]
Or will not hearen all how that it is:
All this dread I, and eke for the mannére
Of thee, her eme,[10] she n'il[11] no such thing hear." 692

Quod Pandarus, "Thou hast a full great care
Lest that the churl may fall out of the moon.
Why; Lord! I hate of thee the nicé fare;[12]
Why intermit[13] of that thou hast to done?
For Goddés love I biddé thee a boon;[14]
So let me' alone, and it shall be thy best."
"Why, friend, (quod he) then do right as thee lest: 699

"But hark, Pandare, one word, for I ne would
That thou in me weened'st[15] so great folly

[1] Sithen—since. [2] Of all his lay—that thou wilt be the best support, I believe, of his profession. [3] Foen grieve — and most annoy his enemies. [4] Aldermost—most of all. [5] Alderbest—best of all. [6] Untormented—waxed (as one may say) untormented in his woe, *i.e.* his sorrow decreased. [7] Sterve—die. [9] Thank—reward [8] Iwis—in truth. [10] Eme—uncle. [11] N'il—will not. [12] Nice fare—I hate your foolish behaviour. [13] Intermit — interpose, meddle with. [14] Bidde thee a boon—I request as a favour of you. [15] Weened'st—should imagine.

That to my lady I desiren should
That toucheth harm or any villainy ;[1]
For dredéless[2] me lever[3] were to die
Than she of me aught ellés understood
But that that might ysounen into good."[4] 706

Then laugh'd this Pandare, and anon answér'd;
"And I thy borrow'?[5] fie! no wight doth but so :
I ne raught[6] not although she stood and heard
How that thou say'st: but farewell, I will go :
Adieu; be glad: God speed us bothé two!
Give me this labour and this business,
And of my speed be thine all the sweetnéss." 713

Then Troilus on knees 'gan down to fall,
And Pandare in his armés hent[7] him fast
And said, "Now fie upon the Greekés all!
Yet pardie God shall helpen at the last,
And dredéless[8] if that my life may last,
And God toforn,[9] lo! some of them shall smart;
And yet me' think'th that this avaunt m'astart.[10] 720

"And now, Pandare, I can no moré say,
But thou wis,[11] thou wo'st thou may'st: thou art all ;
My life, my death, whole in thine hand I lay;
Help me," (quod he). "Yes, by my truth I shall."
"God yield thee,[12] friend, and this in special,
(Quod Troilus) that thou me recommand
To her that may me to the death command." 727

This Pandarus then, desirous to serve
His full friendé, then said in this mannére;
"Farewell, and think I will thy thank deserve;
Have here my truth, and that thou shalt well hear :"
And went his way thinking on this mattére,
And how he best might her beseech of grace,
And find a leisure thereto and a place. 734

For every wight that hath a house to found,
He runneth not the work for to begin
With rakel hand, but he will bide a stound,[13]
And send his heartés line out from within,
Thus alderfirst[14] his purpose for to win,

[1] Villainy — discourtesy. [2] Dredeless—doubtless. [3] Lever—rather. [4] Ysounen into good — be consonant with goodness. [5] Borrow—pledge, guarantee. [6] Raught—cared. [7] Hent—held. [8] Dredeless—doubtless. [9] God toforn—before God. [10] M'astart—that this boast escaped me. [11] Thou wis—thou direct, thou knowest that thou may'st. [12] God yield thee—God reward thee. [13] A stound—with rash hand, but he will pause awhile. [14] Alderfirst—first of all.

As this Pandárus in his heartés thought
Did cast his work full wisely ere he wrought. 741

But Troilus lay then no longer down,
But up anon gat upon his steedé bay,
And in the field he playéd the lióun;
Woe was that Greek that with him met that day:
And in the town his manner then forth aye[1]
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That each him lov'd that lookéd in his face. 748

For he becamen the most friendly wight,
The gentlelest, and eke the mosté free,[2]
The trustiest, and one the besté knight,
That in his timé was or else might be:
Dead were his japés[3] and his cruelty,
Dead his high porte[4] and all his manner strange,
And each of them 'gan for a virtue change. 755

Now let us stint of Troilus astound,[5]
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is somedeal of aking of his wound
Ylessed well,[6] but healed no deal more;
And, as an easy patiént, the lore
Abite[7] of him that go'th about his cure;
And thus he driveth forth his áventure. 762

BOOK II.

OUT of these blacké wawés[8] let us sail,
O wind, O wind! the weather 'ginneth clear,
For in the sea the boat hath such travail
Of my connfng, that únneth[9] I it steer:
This sea clepe[10] I the tempest'ous mattére
Of deep despair that Troilus was in;
But now of hope the kalendés begin. 7

* * * * *

In May, that mother is of monéths glad,
That the fresh flow'rés all, blue, white, and red,
Be quick[11] again, that winter dead had made,
And full of balm is fleeting[12] every mead,
When Phœbus doth his brighté beamés spread

[1] Then forth aye—from that time forth. [2] Free—bountiful. [3] Japes—jestings. [4] High porte—haughty carriage. [5] Astound—awhile. [6] Ylessed well—much relieved. [7] The lore abite—trusteth in the knowledge. [8] Wawes—waves. [9] Unneth—scarcely. [10] Clepe—call. [11] Quick—alive. [12] Fleeting—floating.

Right in the whité Bull, it so betid,[1]
As I shall sing, on Mayés day the thrid,[2] 14

That Pandarus, for all his wisé speech,
Felt eke his part of Lovés shottés keen,
That could he ne'er so well of loving preach
It made his hue all day full often green;
So shope it[3] that him fell that day a teen[4]
In love, for which in woe to bed he went,
And made ere it were day full many' a went.[5] 21

The swallow, Progné, with a sorrowful lay,
When morrow came, 'gan make her waímenting[6]
Why she forshapen[7] was; and ever lay
Pandare abed half in a slumbering,
Till she so nigh him made her waimenting,[6]
How Tereus 'gan forth her sister take;
That with the noise of her he 'gan awake, 28

And to call, and dressen[8] him up to rise,
Rememb'ring him his errand was to done
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plight was the moon
To do voyáge, and took his way full soon
Unto his niece's palace there beside:
Now Janus, god of Entry, thou him guide! 35

When he was come unto his niece's place,
"Where is my lady?" to her folk quod he;
And they him told, and he forth in 'gan pace,
And found two other ladies sit, and she
Within a pavéd parlour, and they three
Hearden a maiden them readen the geste[9]
Of the siege of Thebés, whilst them list.[10] 42

"Madam, quod Pandare, God you save and see,[11]
With all your book and all the company!"
"Eh! uncle mine, welcome iwis,"[12] quod she;
And up she rosé, and by the hand in hie[13]
She took him fast, and sayéd, "This night thrie[14]
(To good may it yturn) of you I met;"[15]
And with that word she down on bench him set. 49

"Yea, niece, ye shallen faren well the bet,[16]
If God will, all this year, quod Pandarus,

[1] Betid — happened. [2] Thrid — third. [3] Shope it — befell it. [4] Teen—grief. [5] Went—turn, tossing. [6] Waimenting—lamentation. [7] Forshapen — transformed. [8] Dressen — prepare. [9] Geste —history. [10] Them list—they listened. [11] And see—and keep you in his sight. [12] Iwis—in truth. [13] In hie—in haste. [14] Thrie —thrice. [15] Met—dreamed. [16] Bet—better.

But I am sorry that I have you let [1]
To hearken of your book ye praisen thus :
For Goddés love what saith it ? tell it us :
Is it of love ? some good ye may me lere." [2]
" Uncle, quod she, your mistress is not here." 56

With that they 'gonnen laugh, and then she said,
" This rómance is of Thebés that we read,
And we have heard how that King Laius died
Through Œdipus his son, and all the deed ;
And here we stinten [3] at these letters rede
How the bishop, as the book can tell,
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to hell." 63

Quod Pandarus, " All this know I myselve,
And all th' assiege of Thebés and the care,
For hereof been there maked bookés twelve :
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare :
Do' way your barbe,[4] and show your facé bare ;
Do' way your book : rise up and let us dance,
And let us do to May some óbservance." 70

" Eh ! God forbid ! quod she. What ! be ye mad?
Is that a widow's life, so God you save ?
Pardie you maken me right sore adread ;
Ye be so wild it seemeth as ye rave :
It sat [5] me well bettér aye in a cave
To bide, and read on holy saintés lives :
Let maidens go to dance, and youngé wives." 77

" As ever thrive I, quod this Pandarus,
Yet could I tell a thing to do you play."
" Now uncle dearé, quod she, tell'th it us
For Goddés love : is then th' assiege away ?
I am of Greekés fear'd so that I dey." [6]
" Nay, nay, quod he, as ever may I thrive,
It is a thing well better than such five." [7] 84

" Yea, holy God ! quod she, what thing is that ?
What ! better than such five ? Eh ! nay iwis ; [8]
For all this world ne can I reden [9] what
It should ybe : some jape [10] I trow it is ;
And but [11] yourselven tell us what it is
My wit is for t' arede it all too lean : [12]
As help me God I n'ot [13] what that ye mean." 91

[1] Let — prevented. [2] Lere — inform. [3] Stinten — stopped. [4] Barbe—hood. [5] Sat—became. [6] Dey—die. [7] Such five — five such. [8] Iwis—indeed. [9] Reden—tell. [10] Jape—jest. [11] But—unless. [12] Too lean—my wit is too spare to interpret it. [13] N'ot—know not.

"And I your borrow,[1] ne ne'er shall, quod he,
This thing be told to you, as may I thrive."
"And why so, uncle mine, why so?" quod she.
"By God, quod he, that will I tell as blive;[2]
For prouder woman is there none on live,
(And ye it wist[3]) in all the town of Troy:
I ne jape[4] not, so ever have I joy." 98

Then 'gan she wond'ren moré than beforn
A thousand fold, and down her eyen cast,
For never sith the time that she was born
To knowen thing desiréd she so fast,
And with a sike[5] she said him at the last;
"Now, uncle mine, I n'il you not displease,
Nor asking that, that may do you disease."[6] 105

So after this with many wordés glad
And friendly talés, and with merry cheer,
Of this and that they spake, and 'gonnen wade
In many an uncouth, glad, and deep mattére,
As friendés do when they been met ifere,[7]
Till she 'gan asken him how Hector far'd,
That was the townés wall, and Greekés yard.[8] 112

"Full well, I thank it God, said Pandarus,
Save in his arm he hath a little wound;
And eke his freshé brother Troilus,
To the wise worthy Hector the secónd,
In whom that every virtue list abound,
As allé truth and allé gentleness,
Wisdom, honóur, freedom,[9] and worthiness." 119

"In good faith, eme,[10] quod she, that liketh me[11]
They farén well; God save them bothé two!
For truly I hold it a great deinty
A kingés son in armés well to do,
And be of good conditións thereto,
For greaté pow'r and moral virtue here
Is seld' iseen in one persón ifere."[12] 126

"In good faith that is soth, quod Pandarus,
But by my truth the king hath sonnés tway,
That is to mean, Hector and Troilus,
That certainly though that I should ydey[13]
They be as void of vices, dare I say,

[1] And I your borrow—and I warrant you. [2] Blive—quickly. [3] And ye it wist—if you knew it. [4] Jape—jest. [5] Sike—sigh. [6] Disease — discomfort. [7] Ifere — in company. [8] Yard — staff, scourge. [9] Freedom—bounty. [10] Eme—uncle. [11] Liketh me—pleaseth me. [12] Ifere—united. [13] Ydey—die.

As any men that liven under sun;
Their might is wide iknown and what they conne.[1] 133

"Of Hector needeth nothing for to tell;
In all this world there n'is a better knight
Than he, that is of worthiness the well,[2]
And he well more of virtue[3] hath than might,
This knoweth many' a wise and worthy knight:
And the same praise of Troilus I say:
God help me, so I know not suché tway." 140

"Pardie, quod she, of Hector that is soth,[4]
And of Troilus the samé thing trow I,
For dredéless[5] men telleth that he doth
In armés day by day so worthily,
And bear'th him here at homé so gently
To ev'ry wight, that allé praise hath he
Of them that me were levest praiséd be."[6] 147

"Ye say right soth iwis,[7] quod Pandarus,
For yesterday whoso had with him been
Mighten have wond'red upon Troilus;
For never yet so thick a swarm of been[8]
Ne flew, as Greekés from him 'gonnen fleen,
And through the field in every wightés ear
There was no cry but 'Troilus is there!' 154

"Now here, now there, he hunted them so fast,
There n'as but Greekés blood and Troilus;
Now him he hurt, and him all down he cast;
Aye where he went it was arrayéd thus:
He was their death, and shield and life for us,
That as that day there durst him none withstand
While that he held his bloody sword in hand. 161

"Thereto he is the friendiliest man
Of great estate that e'er I saw my live,
And where he list, the best fellówship can
To such as he thinketh able to thrive."[9]
And with that word then Pandarus as blive[10]
He took his leave, and said, "I will go hen."
"Nay, blame have I, mine uncle, quod she then. 168

"What aileth you to be thus weary soon,
And namély of women will ye so?

[1] Conne—are capable of. [2] Well—fountain. [3] Virtue—courage. [4] Soth—true. [5] Dredeless—doubtless. [6] Levest praised be—he is praised by all those, of whom I should most desire to be praised. [7] Soth iwis—you certainly say true. [8] Been—bees. [9] Able to thrive—and where he pleases, he is able to afford the best companionship to such as he thinks able to thrive. [10] Blive—briskly.

Nay, sitteth down; pardie I have to done[1]
With you, to speak of wisdom[2] ere ye go:"
And every wight that was about them tho[3]
That heardé that, 'gan far away to stand.
While they two had all that them list in hand. 175

When that her tale all brought was to an end
Of her estate and of her governance;
Quod Pandarus, "Now time is that I wend,[4]
But yet I say, Ariseth, let us dance,
And cast your widow's habit to mischance;
What list you thus yourself to disfigúre,
Sith you is tidde[5] so glad an áventure?" 182

"But well bethought; for love of God, quod she,
Shall I not weeten[6] what ye mean of this?"
"No, this thing asketh leisure then, quod he,
And eke it me would full much grieve iwis,
If I it told and ye it took amiss:
Yet were it bet my tongue to holden still
Than say a soth[7] that were against your will. 189

"For, niecé mine, by the goddéss Minerve,
And Jupiter, that mak'th the thundering,
And by the blissful Venus that I serve,
Ye be the woman in this world living,
Withouten paramours, to my weeting[8]
That I best love, and lothest am to grieve,
And that ye weeten well yourself I 'lieve."[9] 196

"Iwis, mine uncle, quod she, grand mercy!
Your friendship have I founden ever yet;
I am to no man 'holden truély
So much as you, and have so little quit;[10]
And, with the grace of God, emforth my wit,[11]
As in my guilt I shall you ne'er offend,
And if I have ere this, I will amend. 203

"But for the love of God I you beseech,
As ye be he that I love most and trist,[12]
Let be to me your freméd[13] manner speech,
And say to me your niece what so you list."
And with that word her uncle' anon her kiss'd,
And said; "Gladly, my levé[14] niece so dear!
Take it for good that I shall say you here." 210

[1] I have to done—I have business with you. [2] Of wisdom—of importance. [3] Tho—then. [4] Wend—go. [5] Tidde—befallen. [6] Weeten—know. [7] Soth—truth. [8] Weeting—thinking. [9] 'Lieve—believe. [10] Quit—requited. [11] Emforth my wit—to the utmost of my understanding. [12] Trist—trust. [13] Fremed—strange. [14] Leve—beloved, dear.

With that she 'gan her eyen down to cast,
And Pandarus to cough began a lite,[1]
And sayéd ; "Niece, alway, lo ! to the last,
How so it be that some men them delight
With subtle art their talés for t' indite,
Yet for all that, in their intentión
Their tale is all for some conclusión. 217

"And sith the end is every talé's strength,
And this matter is so behovély,[2]
What should I paint or drawen it on length
To you that be my friend so faithfully ?"
And with that word he 'gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and looken in her face,
And said ; "On such mirrór much goodé grace!" 224

Then thought he thus ; if I my tale indite
Aught hardy', or make a process any while,
She shall no savour have therein but lite,[3]
And trow, I would her in my will beguile ;
For tender wittés weenen all be wile[4]
Whereas they cannot plainly understond ;
Forthy her wit to sounden will I fond ;[5] 231

And lookéd on her in a busy wise,
And she was 'ware that he beheld her so :
"Ah Lord ! quod she, so fast ye me avise,[6]
Saw ye me ne'er ere now ? what, say ye no ?"
"Yes, yes, quod he, and bet will ere I go ;
But by my truth I thoughten now if ye
Be fortunate, for now men shall it see. 238

* * * * *

"Now niecé mine, the kingés own dear son,
The good, the wise, the worthy, fresh and free,
Which alway for to do well is his wonne,[7]
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That but ye help, it will his bane ybe.
Lo ! here is all : what shoulden I more say ?
Do what you list to make him live or dey."[8] 245

* * * * *

[To this disclosure on the part of Pandarus succeeds a eulogy of his friend, with a prayer that she will be kind, and receive his vows of affection and truth.]

[1] A lite—a little. [2] Behovely—advantageously. [3] Lite—little. [4] All be wile—weak minds think all is deceit. [5] Will I fond—therefore I will try to sound her understanding. [6] Avise—scrutinize. [7] Wonne—custom. [8] Dey—die.

Creseida, which that heard him in this wise,
Thought, "I shall feel what he meaneth iwis.
Now eme,[1] quod she, what woulden ye devise?[2]
What is your rede[3] that I should do of this?"
"That is well said, quod he: certáin best is
That ye him love again for his loving,
As love for love is skilful guerdoning.[4] 25

"Think eke how eldé[5] wasteth ev'ry hour
In each of you, a part of your beautý;
And therefore ere that age doth thee devour,
Go love, for old, there will no wight love thee.
Let this provérb a lore[6] unto you be;
Too late aware, quod Beauty, when it past,
And elde ydaunteth danger[7] at the last. 259

"The kingés fool is wont to cry aloud,
When that he thinketh a woman bear'th her high,
So longé may ye liven, and all proud,
Till crowés feet growen under your eye,
And send you then a mirror in to pry
In which that ye may see your face a-morrow:
Niece, I bid him wishen you no moré sorrow."

With this he stint,[8] and cast adown the head,
And she began to burst and weep anon,
And said; "Alas for woe! why n'ere[9] I dead?
For of this world the faith is all agone:
Alas! what shoulden strange[10] unto me done,
When he that for my besté friend I ween'd
Redeth[11] me love who should it me defend?[12]

"Alas! I would have trusted doubtéless
That if that I through my disáventure
Had loved either him or A'chilles,
Hector, or any other creáture,
Ye n'old have had no mercy ne measúre
On me, but alway had me in repreve:[13]
This falsé world, alas! who may it 'lieve?[14]

"What! is this all the joy and all the feast
Is this your rede?[3] is this my blissful case?
Is this the very meed of your behest?[15]
Is this all painted process said—alas!
Right for this fine?[16] O lady mine Pallás,

[1] Eme—uncle. [2] Devise—direct. [3] Rede—advice. guerdoning—reasonable return, or reward. [5] Elde—ag —lesson, maxim. [7] Ydaunteth danger—overcomes coyn —ceased. [9] N'ere I—were I not. [10] Strange—strangers —adviseth. [12] Defend—forbid. [13] Repreve—reproof —believe. [15] Behest—promise. [16] For this fine?—is of all this painted procession?

Thou in this dreadful case for me purvey,[1]
For so astonied am I that I dey."[2] 287

With that she 'gan full sorr'wfully to sike :[3]
"Ah ! may it be no bet? quod Pandarus ;
By God I shall no more come here this week,
And God to-forne,[4] that am mistrusted thus ;
I see well now ye setten light of us
Or of our death, alas ! I, woful wretch,
Might he yet live, of me were naught to retch."[5] 294

* * * * *

Crescida, which that well nigh starf[6] for fear,
So as she was aye the most fearful wight
That mighten be, and heard eke with her ear,
And saw the sorr'wful earnest[7] of the knight,
And in his prayér saw eke no unright,[8]
And for the harm eke that might fallen more,
She 'gan to rue, and dread her wonder sore : 301

* * * * *

[After debating with herself, she promises her uncle to endeavour, so far as is consistent with her honour, to render herself acceptable to the knight. However she concludes :—]

"But here I make a protestatión
That in this process if ye deeper go,
That certainly for no salvatión
Of you, though that ye starven bothé two,
Though all the world on one day be my foe,
Ne shall I ne'er on him have other ruth."
"I grant it well, quod Pandare, by my truth. 308

"But may I trusten well to you, quod he,
That of this thing that ye have hight[9] me here,
Ye will it holden truly unto me?"
"Yea, doubtéless, quod she, mine uncle deare !"
"Ne that I shall have cause in this mattére,
Quod he, to plain or after you to preach?"
"Why no, pardie ; what needeth moré speech?" 315

Then fellen they in other talés glad,
Till at the last ; "O good eme ![10] quod she tho[11]
For love of God, which that us both ymade,
Tell me how first ye wisten of his woe ;
Wot[12] none of it but ye?" He sayéd "No."
"Can he well speak of love, quod she, I pray?
Tell me, for I the bet shall me purvey." 322

[1] Purvey—provide. [2] Dey—die. [3] Sike—sigh. [4] God to-forne—before God. [5] Retch—care. [6] Starf—died. [7] Earnest—purpose. [8] Unright—wrong, harm. [9] Hight—promised. [10] Eme—uncle. [11] Tho—then. [12] Wot—knows.

Then Pandarus a little 'gán to smile,
And sayéd; "By my truth I shall now tell:
This other day, not gone full longé while,
Within the palace garden by a well[1]
'Gan he and I well half a day to dwell,
Right for to speaken of an ordinance[2]
How we the Greekés mighten disavance:[3] 329

"Soon after that began we for to leap
And casten with our dartés to and fro,
Till at the last he sayéd he would sleep,
And on the grass adown he laid him tho;[4]
And I after 'gan roamen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as I walkéd alone,
How he began full wofully to groan. 336

"Tho 'gan I stalk him full softlý behind,
And sikerly,[5] the sothé for to sain,
As I can clepe again[6] now to my mind,
Right thus to Love he 'gan him for to plain:
He sayed; 'Lord, have ruth upon my pain;
All have I been rebéll in mine intent,
Now (*mea culpa!*)* Lord, I me repent. 343

"'O God! that at thy dispositión
Lead'st forth the finé[7] by just púrveyance
Of every wight, my low confessión
Accept in gré,[8] and send me such penance
As liketh thee; put from me desperance,[9]
That may my ghost depart alway from thee:
Thou be my shield for thy benignity. 350

"'For certés, Lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stood in black with looking of her eyen,
That to mine heartés bottom it is founded,
Through which I wot that I must needés dien.
This is the worst, I dare me not bewrién,[10]
And well the hotter be the gleedés[11] red
That men them wrien[12] with ashen pale and dead.' 357

"With that he smote his head adown anon,
And 'gan to mutter I n'ot what truély,

[1] Well—spring. [2] Ordinance—plan, disposition. [3] Disavance—drive back. [4] Tho—then. [5] Sikerly—truly. [6] Clepe again—recall. [7] Leadest forth the fine—drawest the conclusion by just provision. [8] In gre—in good part. [9] Desperance—despair. [10] Me not bewrien—not make known my mind. [11] Gleedes—flames. [12] Wrien—cover.

* "*Mea culpa! mea culpa!*" "my transgression! my transgression!" The ejaculation made by communicants upon beginning their confession to the priest.

And I with that 'gan still away to gone,
And let thereof as nothing wist[1] had I,
And came again anon and stood him by,
And said, 'Awake, ye sleepen all too long;
It seemeth me not that Lové doth you wrong 364

"'That sleepen so that no man may you wake;
Who saw evér ere this so dull a man?'
'Yea, friend, quod he, do ye your headés ake
For love, and let me liven as I can:'
But though that he for woe was pale and wan,
Yet made he then as fresh a countenance
As though he should have led the newé dance." 371

* * * * *

With this he took his leave, and home he went:
Yea, Lord, how he was glad and well begone!
Creseid' arose, no longer she ne stent,[2]
But straight into her closet went anon,
And set her down as still as any stone,
And every word 'gan up and down to wind
That he had said as it came her to mind. 378

And woxe somedeal astonied in her thought
Right for the newé case; but when that she
Was full aviséd,[3] then found she right naught
Of peril why she ought afearéd be;
For man may love of possibility
A woman so that his hearté may to brest,[4]
And she not love again, but if her lest.[5] 385

But as she sat alone and thoughté thus,
In field arose a skirmish all without,
And men cried in the street, "See! Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Greekés rout:"
With that 'gan all her meiné[6] for to shout,
"Ah! go we see; cast up the gatés wide,
For through this street he must to palace ride, 392

"For other way is from the gatés none
Of Dardanus, there open is the chain:"
With that came he and all his folk anon
An easy pace riding in routés twain,[7]
Right as his happy day was, soth to sain,
For which men say may not disturbéd be,
That shall betiden of necessity. 399

[1] Nothing wist—and made appearance as though I had known nothing of it. [2] Stent—remained. [3] Full avised—had well considered. [4] To brest—burst. [5] But if her lest—unless she please. [6] Meine—attendants. [7] Routes twain—two companies.

This Troilus sat on his bayé steed
All arméd save his head full richély,
And wounded was his horse, and 'gan to bleed,
On which he rode a pace full softély;
But such a knightly sight, lo! truély
As was on him was not withoutén fail
To look on Mars, that god is of battáile. 406

So like a man of armés and a knight
He was to see, fulfill'd of high prowess,
For both he had a body and a might
To do that thing as well as hardiness,
And eke to see him in his gearé dress,[1]
So fresh, so young, so wieldy,[2] seeméd he,
It was a heaven on him for to see. 413

His helm to-hewén was in twenty places,
That by a tissue hung his back behind,
His shield to-dash'd with swordés and with maces,
In which men might many' an arrow find
That thirled[3] had both horn, and nerve, and rind;
And aye the people cried, "Here com'th our joy,
And, next his brother, holder up of Troy!" 420

For which he wax'd a little red for shame
When he so heard the people on him crién,
That, to behold, it was a noble game
How soberly he cast adown his eyen.
Creseid' anon 'gan all his cheer[4] espién,
And let it in her heart so softly sink
That to herself she said, "Ho! give me drink." 427

For of her owné thought she woxe all red,
Rememb'ring her right thus; "Lo! this is he
Which that mine uncle swear'th he must be dead
But[5] I on him have mercy and pitý:"
And with that ilké thought for pure shame she
'Gan in her head to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the people forth by past: 434

And 'gan to cast and rollen up and down
Within her thought his excellent prowéss,
And his estate, and also his renown,
His wit, his shape, and eke his gentleness;
But most her favour was, for[6] his distress
Was all for her, and thought it were a ruth
To slayén such one, if that he meanté truth. 441

* * * * *

[1] Geare dress—fashioned apparel. [2] Wieldy—nimble. [3] Thirled—pierced. [4] Cheer—manner. [5] But—except. [6] For—because.

Now let us stint of Troilus a throw,[1]
That rideth forth, and let us turné fast
Unto Creseid', that hung her head full low
There as she sat alone, and 'gan to cast
Whereon she would appoint her at the last,
If it so were her eme[2] ne would ycease
For Troilus upon her for to press. 448

And, Lord! so she 'gan in her thought argúe
In this mattér of which I have you told,
And what to do best were, and what eschew,
That plaited she full oft in many fold;
Now was her hearté warm, now was it cold;
And what she thought of, somewhat shall I write
As mine authór listeth to me t' indite. 455

She thought well first that Troilus' persón
She knew by sight, and eke his gentleness,
And thus she said; "All were it[3] naught to done
To grant him love, yet for his worthiness
It were honóur with play and with gladness
In honesty with such a lord to deal
For mine estate, and also for his heal.[4] 462

"Eke well wot I my kingés son is he,
And sith he hath to see me such delight,
If I would utterly his sight yflee,
Par 'venture he might have me in despite,
Through which I might standen in worsé plight:
Now were I wise, me haté to purcháse,
Withouten need, there[5] I may stand in grace? 469

"In every thing I wot there lieth measúre;
For though a man forbiddeth drunkenness,
He naught forbiddeth that every creatúre
Be drinkéless for alway, as I guess;
Eke, sith I wot for me is his distress,
I ne ought not for that thing him despise,
Sith it is so he meaneth in good wise. 476

"And eke I know of longé time agone
His thewés good,[6] and that he n'is not nice,[7]
No vaunter say men certain he is none;
Too wise is he to do so great a vice;
Ne als' I n'ill him never so cherfce[8]
That he shall make avaunt by justé cause;
He shall me never bind in such a clause. 483

[1] A throw—a while. [2] Eme—uncle. [3] All were it—although it were. [4] Heal—welfare, advantage. [5] There—where. [6] His thewes good—and I have long known his worthy qualities. [7] Nice—foolish. [8] Cherice—cherish.

"Now set a case;—the hardiest is iwis,[1]
Men mighten deemen that he loveth me;
What dishonóur were it unto me this?
May I him let[2] of that? why nay, pardie;
I know also, and alway hear and see,
Men loven women all this town about;
Be they the worse?—why nay, withouten doubt. 490

"I think eke, how he worthy is to have
Of all this noble town the thriftiest[3]
That woman is, if she her honour save;
For, out and out, he is the worthiest,
Save only Hector, which that is the best;
And yet his life lieth all now in my cure:
But such is love, and eke mine áventure. 497

"Nor me to love a wonder is it naught,
For well wot I myself (so God me speed,
Al'[4] will I that none wisté of this thought),
I am one of the fairest out of drede,[5]
And goodliest, whoso that taketh heed,[6]
And so men say, in all the town of Troy;
What wonder is though he of me have joy? 504

"I am mine owné woman, well at ease,
I thank it God, as after mine estate,
Right young, and stand untied in lusty lese,[7]
Withouten jealousy, and such debate:—
Shall no husbánd say unto me Check mate,
For either they be full of jealousy,
Or masterfull,[8] or loven novelty. 511

"What shall I do? to what fine[9] live I thus?
Shall I not love in case if that me lest?[10]
What? pardieu I am not religióus;
And though that I mine hearté set at rest
Upon this knight, that is the worthiest,
And keep alway mine honour and my name,
By all right it may do to me no shame." 518

But right as when the sunné shineth bright
In March, that changeth oftentime his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flight
Which overspread the sun as for a space;
A cloudy thought 'gan through her soulé pace
That overspread her brighté thoughtés all,
So that for fear almost she 'gan to fall. 525

[1] Iwis—certainly. [2] Let—hinder. [3] Thriftiest—sparing, cautious, careful. [4] Al'—although. [5] Drede—doubt. [6] Taketh heed—observeth. [7] Lusty lese—love's leash. [8] Masterfull—domineering. [9] Fine—end. [10] Lest—please.

That thought was this; "Alas! sith I am free,
Should I now love and put in jeopardy
My sikerness, and thrallen liberty?[1]
Alas! how durst I thinken that follý?
May I not well in other folk espy
Their dreadful[2] joy, their cónstraint and their pain?
There loveth none that ne hath why to 'plain. 532

"For love is yet the mosté stormy life
Right of himself that ever was begun,
For ever some mistrust or nicé[3] strife
There is in love, some cloud over the sun;
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne,[4]
When us is woe, but weep, and sit, and think:
Our wreak[5] is this, our owné woe to drink. 539

"Also these wicked tongués be so prest
To speak us harm, eke men be so untrue,
That right anon as ceaséd is their lest[6]
So ceaseth love, and forth to love anew:
But Harm ydo is done, whoso it rue;
For though these men for love them first to rend,
Full sharp beginning breaketh oft at end. 546

"How often time hath it yknowen been
The treason that to women hath be do![7]
To what fine[8] is such love I cannot seen,
Or where becometh it when it is go[9]
There is no wight that wot, I trowé so;[10]
Where it becometh lo no wight on it spurneth;
That erst[11] was nothing, into nothing turneth. 553

"How busy, if I love, eke must I be
To pleasen them that jangle' of love and deem,[12]
And coy'n[13] them, that they say no harm of me!
For though there be no cause, yet them may seem
All be for harm that folk their friendés queme;[14]
And who may stoppen every wicked tongue,
Or sound of bellés while that they be rung?" 560

And after that her thought 'gan for to clear,
And said, "He which that nothing undertaketh

[1] Thrallen liberty—put my security in jeopardy, and enslave my liberty. [2] Dreadful—fearful. [3] Nice—foolish. [4] Nothing conne—we can do nothing. [5] Wreak—revenge. [6] Lest—pleasure. [7] Be do—been done. [8] Fine—end. [9] Go—gone. [10] No wight that wot I trowe so—I believe no one knows. [11] That erst—that which heretofore. [12] Deem—sit in judgment. [13] Coyen—soothe. [14] Queme—please.

Nothing achieveth, be him loth or dear;"[1]
And with another thought her heart yquaketh;
Then sleepeth hope, and after drede[2] awaketh;
Now hot now cold: but thus betwixen tway,
She rist her up and went her for to play. 567

Adown the stair anon right then she went
Into her garden, with her nieces three,
And up and down they maden many' a went[3]
Flexippe' and she, Tarbe' and Antigoné,
To playen, that it joyé was to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her follow'd in the garden all about. 574

This yard was large, and railéd all the alleys,
And shadow'd well with blos'omy boughés green,
And benchéd new, and sanded all the ways,
In which she walketh arm in arm between,
Till at the last Antigoné the sheen[4]
'Gan on a Trojan song to singen clear,
That it a heaven was her voice to hear. 581

* * * * *

And of her song right with that word she stent,[5]
And therewithal, "Now niecé, quod Creseid',
Who made this song now with so good intent?'
Antigoné answer'd anon, and said,
"Madáme, iwis[6] it was the goodliest maid,
Of great estate, in all the town of Troy,
Who led her life in most honóur and joy." 588

"Forsoth so it yseemeth by her song,"
Quod then Creseid', and 'gan therewith to sike,[7]
And sayéd, "Lord! is there such bliss among
These lovers, as they can so fair indite?"
"Yea, wiss, quod fresh Antigoné the white,
For all the folk that have e'er been on live
Ne coulden well the bliss of love descrive."[8] 595

"But weenen ye that every wretché wot
The perfect bliss of love?"—"Why nay, iwis;[6]
They weenen all be love if one be hot;
Do' way, do' way! they wot nothíng of this:
Men may asken of saintes if it is
Aught fair in heaven? and why? for they can tell;
And asken fiends if it be foul in hell?" 602

[1] Loth or dear—be he unwilling or desirous, (qy. ?) [2] Drede—doubt. [3] Went—turn. [4] Sheen—the shining, the beautiful. [5] Stent—ceased. [6] Iwis—certainly. [7] Sike—sigh. [8] Descrive—describe.

Creseid' unto the purpose naught answér'd,
But said; "Iwis[1] it will be night as fast;"
But every word which that she of her heard
She 'gan to printen in her hearté fast,
And aye 'gan love her less for to aghast
Than' it did erst, and sinken in her heart,
That she wax somewhat able to convert. 609

The dayés honour and the heavenés eye,
The nightés foe,—all this clepe I the sun,
'Gan western fast, and downward for to wrie,[2]
As he that had his dayés course irun,
And whité thingés woxen all dim and dun
For lack of light, and starrés for to' appear,
That she and all her folk in went ifere.[3] 616

So when it liked her to go to rest,
And voided weren they that voiden ought,
She sayed, that to sleepen well her lest;[4]
Her women soon unto her bed her brought:
When all was hush'd then lay she still and thought
Of all this thing the manner and the wise;
Rehearse it needeth not, for ye be wise. 623

A nightingale upon a cedar green
Under the chamber wall there as she lay,
Full loud ysung again the mooné sheen,[5]
Par 'venture, in his birdés wise,[6] a lay
Of love, that made her hearté fresh and gay;
That hearkenéd she so long in good intent[7]
Till at the last the deadé sleep her hent.[8] 630

And as she slept anon right then her met[9]
How that an eagle, feathered white as bone,
Under her breast his longé clawés set,
And out her heart he rent, and that anon,
And did his heart into her breast to gone:
Of which she naught agrose,[10] ne nothing smart,
And forth he flyeth, with heart left for heart. 637

Now let her sleep, and we our talés hold
Of Troilus, that is to palace ridden
From the skirmish of the which I told,
And in his chamber sat and hath abidden
Till two or three of his messengers yeden[11]
For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast
Till they him found, and brought him at the last. 644

[1] Iwis—certainly. [2] Wrie—turn. [3] Ifere—together. [4] Her lest—she wished. [5] Sheen—shining. [6] Birdes wise—after his bird-like fashion, or manner. [7] Intent—attention. [8] Hent—caught. [9] Met—dreamed. [10] Agrose—shuddered. [11] Yeden—went.

This Pandarus came leaping in at once,
And sayéd thus, "Who hath been well ibeat
To day with swordés and with slingé stones
But Troilus, that hath caught him a heat?"
And 'gan to jape,[1] and said; "Lord how ye sweat!
But rise and let us sup and go to rest:"
And he answér'd him, "Do we as thee lest."[2] 651

With all the hasté goodly as they might,
They sped them from the supper and to bed;
And every wight out at the door him dight,[3]
And where him list upon his way he sped;
But Troilus thought that his hearté bled
For woe till that he heardé some tiding,
And sayéd; "Friend, shall I now weep or sing?"

Quod Pandarus, "Be still and let me sleep, 659
And d' on thy hood, thy needés sped ybe,[4]
And choose if thou wilt sing, or dance, or leap:
At short words, thou shalt trow[5] all by me,
For, Sir, my niece will doen well by thee,
And love thee best, by God and by my troth,
But lack of púrsuit mar it in thy sloth.[6] 665

"For thus farforth I have thy work begun
From day to day, till this day by the morrow
Her love of friendship have I to thee won,
And thereto hath she laid her faith to borrow;[7]
Algate one foot is hameled of thy sorrow:"[8]
What should I longer sermon of it hold?
As ye have heard before, all he him told. 672

But right as flowrés through the cold of night,
Yclosed, stoopen in their stalkés low,
Redressen them against the sunné bright,
And spreaden in their kindé course by row;
Right so 'gan then his eyen up to throw
This Troilus, and said; "O Venus dear!
Thy might, thy grace, yheriéd[10] be it here." 679

And to Pandare he held up both his hands,
And sayéd; "Lord, all thine be that I have,
For I am whole, and bursten be my bands,

[1] Jape—jest. [2] Lest—pleaseth. [3] Him dight—disposed himself. [4] Thy needes sped ybe—your affairs have prospered. [5] Trow—believe. [6] But, &c.—unless from want of following it up, you ruin it in your sloth. [7] Her faith to borrow—pledged her faith. [8] Hameled of thy sorrow—one foot therefore of thy sorrow is hamstrung, disabled. [9] Kinde course—natural course. [10] Yheried—worshipped.

A thousand Troyés whoso that me gave
Each after other, (God so wis me save[1])
Ne might not me so gladden: lo! mine heart
It spreadeth so for joy it will to-start.[2] 686

"But, Lord, how shall I doen? how shall I liven?
When shall I next my own dear heart ysee?
How shall this longé time away be driven
Till that thou be again at her from me?
Thou may'st answér, 'Abide, abide;' but he
That hangeth by the neck, the soth to sain,
In great disease[3] abideth for the pain." 693

* * * * *

[Pandarus, in answer, recommends his friend to write her a letter, of which he promises to bear the charge; and farthermore recommends his riding, as it were by chance, by her house, when he will take care that she shall be at the window engaged in conversation with him,—and the subject, of course, the man whom he desires to serve.]

This counsel liked[4] well to Troilus,
But, as a dreadful[5] lover, he said this;
"Alas! my dearé brother Pandarus!
I am ashaméd for to write iwis,[6]
Lest of mine ignorance I said amiss,
Or that she n'olde it for despite receive;
Then were I dead, there might it nothing weve."[7]

To that Pandare answeréd; "If thee lest,[8] 701
Do that I say, and let me therewith gone,
For by that Lord that forméd east and west,
I hope of it to bring answér anon
Right of her hand, and if that thou n'ilt non[9]
Let be, and sorry may he be his live,
Against thy lust[10] that helpeth thee to thrive." 707

Quod Troilus, "Depardieu I assent;
Sith that thee list I will arise and write,
And blissful God pray I with good intent
The voyage and letter' I shall indite
So speed it, and thou Minerva the White[11]
Give thou me wit my letter to devise:"
And set him down, and wrote right in this wise. 714

First he 'gan her his right ladý to call,
His heartés life, his lust,[10] his sorrow's leech,[12]
His bliss, and eke those other termés all

[1] God so wis me save—so surely God preserve me. [2] To start—leap forth. [3] Disease—discomfort. [4] Liked—pleased. [5] Dreadful—fearful, timid. [6] Iwis—in truth. [7] Weve—waive, prevent, put off. [8] Lest—please. [9] N'ilt non—wilt not. [10] Lust—delight. [11] White—emblem of purity. [12] Leech—physician,

That in such case ye lovers allé seech,
And in full humble wise, as in his speech,
He 'gan him recommend unto her grace :
To tell all how, it asketh muchel space. 721

And after this full lowly he her pray'd
To be naught wroth though he of his follý
So hardy[1] was to her to write, and said
That love it made, or ellés must he die,
And piteously 'gan mercy for to cry ;
And after that he said, and lied full loud,
Himself was little worth, and less he could, 728

And that she would have his conning[2] excuséd,
That little was ; and eke he dread' her so,
And his unworthiness aye he accuséd ;
And after that then 'gan he tell his woe ;
But that was endéless withouten ho ;[3]
And said, he would in truth alway him hold,
And read it o'er, and 'gan the letter fold : 735

And with his salté tearés 'gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it set
Upon the wax deliverly and rath,[4]
Therewith a thousand timés ere he let[5]
He kiss'd the letter when he had it shet,
And said, " Letter, a blissful destiny
Thee shapen is ; my lady shall thee see ! " 742

This Pandare took the letter, and betime
A-morrow to his niecés palace start,
And fast he swore that it was passéd prime,
And 'gan to jape,[6] and said, " Iwis mine heart
So fresh it is (although it soré smart)
I may not sleep nevér a Mayés morrow,
I have a jolly woe, a lusty sorrow." 749

Creseida, when that she her uncle heard,
With dreadful[7] heart, and désirous to hear
The cause of his coming, right thus answér'd ;
" Now by your faith, mine uncle, quod she, dear !
What manner windés guideth you now, here ?
Tell us your jolly woe and your penánce ;
How farforth be ye put in lovés dance ? " 756

" By God, quod he, I hop alway behind ; "[8]
And she to laugh as though her heart to brest.[9]

[1] Hardy—bold. [2] Conning—skill. [3] Ho—an interjection commanding cessation. [4] Deliverly and rath—skilfully and quickly. [5] Let—ceased. [6] Jape—jest. [7] Dreadful—alarmed. [8] Alway behind—I am always behind hand. [9] To brest—would burst.

Quod Pandarus, "Look alway that ye find
Game in my hood, but hearkeneth if you lest;
There is right now come to the town a guest,
A Greek espy, and telleth newé things,
For which I come to tell you new tidings. 763

"Into the garden go we', and ye shall hear
All privily of this a long sermón."
With that they wenten arm in arm ifere[1]
Into the garden from the chamber down;
And when that he so far was, that the soun
Of that which he spake no man hearen might,
He said her thus, and out the letter plight:[2] 770

"Lo! he that is all wholly yourés free,
Him recommendeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this letter here by me;
Aviseth[3] you on it when ye have space,
And of some goodly answer you purcháse,[4]
Or, help me God so, plainly for to sain,
He may not longé liven for his pain." 777

Full dreadfully[5] then 'gan she standen still,
And took it not, but all her humble cheer
'Gan for to changen, and said; "Scrip nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such mattére,
Ne bring me none; and also, uncle dear!
To mine estate have more regard, I pray,
Than to his lust:[6] what shoulden I more say? 784

"And looketh now if this be reason'áble,
And letteth[7] not for favour nor for sloth:
To say a soth, now is it covenáble[8]
To mine estate, by God and by my truth,
To take it, or to haven of him ruth
In harming of myself or in repreve?[9]
Bear it again for him that ye on 'lieve." 791

This Pandarus 'gan on her for to stare,
And sayéd; "Now is this the greatest wonder
That e'er I saw; let be this nicé fare:[10]
To deathé may I smitten be with thunder
If for the city which that standeth yonder
Would I a letter to you bring or take
To harm of you: what list[11] you thus it make? 798

[1] Ifere—together. [2] Plight—plucked. [3] Aviseth—consider, read it. [4] Purchase—provide. [5] Dreadfully—in fear. [6] Than to his lust—have more regard to my condition than to his delight. [7] Letteth not—pause not. [8] Covenable—suitable. [9] Repreve—reproof. [10] Nice fare—foolish conduct. [11] List you—what is your pleasure thus to make of it? (I am not satisfied with this interpretation, but I am at a loss for a better.)

"But thus ye faren well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him ye retchen[1] least where he become,
And whether that he live or ellés starve;
But for all that, that e'er I may deserve,
Refuse it not," quod he, and hent[2] her fast,
And in her bosom down the letter thrast, 805

And said her; "Now cast it away anon
That folk may see and garen on us tway."[3]
Quod she, "I can abide till they be gone;"
And 'gan to smile, and said him; "Eme,[4] I pray
Such answer as you list yourself purvey,
For truely I will no letter write."
"No! then will I, quod he, so ye indite." 812

Therewith she laugh'd, and sayéd, "Go we dine;"
And he 'gan at himself to japen[5] fast,
And sayéd; "Niece, I have so great a pine
For love, that evereach other day I fast;"
And 'gan his besté japés forth to cast,
And made her so to laugh at his folly
That she for laughter weened[6] for to die. 819

And when that she was come into the hall;
"Now eme, quod she, we will go dine anon;"
And 'gan some of her women to her call,
And straight into her chamber 'gan she gone;
But of her businesses this was one
Amongés other thingés, out of drede,[7]
Full privily this letter for to read. 826

Aviséd[8] word by word in every line,
And found no lack; she thought he could his good;[9]
And put it up, and went her in to dine;
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Ere he was 'ware she took him by the hood,
And sayéd; "Ye were caught ere that ye wist."[10]
"I vouchsafe, quod he, do whate'er you list."[11] 833

Then washen they, and set them down and eat;
And after noon full slyly Pandarus
'Gan draw him to the window nigh the street,
And sayéd; "Niece, who hath arrayed thus
The yonder house that stant aforyen[12] us?"

[1] Retchen—care. [2] Hent—held. [3] Garen on us tway—look on, observe us two. [4] Eme—uncle. [5] Japen—joke. [6] Weened—thought. [7] Out of drede—without doubt. [8] Avised—considered. [9] Could his good—knew his advantage. [10] Wist—suspected. [11] List—please. [12] Aforyen—fore against.

"Which house?" quod she, and 'gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told: 840

And fellen forth in speech of thingés smale,[1]
And satten in the window bothé tway.
When Pandarus saw time unto his tale,
And saw well that her folk were all away;
"Now, niecé mine, tell on, quod he, I pray;
How liketh you the letter that ye wot?
Can he thereon?[2] for by my truth I n'ot."[3] 847

Therewith all rosy hued then waxéd she,
And 'gan to hum, and sayéd; "So I trow."[4]
"Acquit him well for Goddés love, quod he,
Myself to medés will the letter sew;"[5]
And held his handés up, and fell on know.[6]
"Now, goodé niece, be it nevér so lite,[7]
Give me the labour it to sew and plite."[8] 854

"Yea, for I can so writen, quod she tho,[9]
And eke I n'ot what I should to him say."
"Nay, niece, quod Pandarus, say you not so,
Yet at the least ythanketh him I pray
Of his good will. O do him not to dey![10]
Now for the love of me, my niecé dear!
Refuseth not at this time my prayére." 861

"Depardieu! quod she, God lene[11] all be well;
God help me so this is the firsté letter
That e'er I wrote, yea all or any deal:"[12]
And int' a closet for t' avise[13] her better
She went alone, and 'gan her heart unfetter
Out of Disdainés prison but a lite,[7]
And set her down and 'gan a letter write: 868

Of which to tell in short is mine intent
Th' effect as far as I can understand:
She thankéd him of all that he well meant
Towardés her, but holden him in hand[14]
She wouldé not, ne maken herself bond
In love, but as his sister him to please,
She would aye fain to do his heart an ease. 875

[1] Smale—small. [2] Can he thereon?—we should say in familiar speech, "Is he *au fait?* is he master of his subject?" [3] N'ot—know not. [4] So I trow—I think so. [5] To medes will the letter sew—I myself will in return sew the letter: it was usual, and indeed necessary, formerly to sew letters when they were written on parchment; but the practice continued long after the invention of paper. —*Gloss.* [6] Knowe—knee: a poetical licence for the rhyme. [7] Lite—little. [8] Plite—plait, fold. [9] Tho—then. [10] Dey—die. [11] Lene—grant. [12] Any deal—any part. [13] Avise—consider. [14] Hold in hand—dally with, keep in suspense.

She shut it, and to Pandare in 'gan gone
There as he sat and lookéd into street,
And down she set her by him on a stone
Of jaspre', upon a cushion of gold ibeat,[1]
And said; "As wisly[2] help me God the great,
I never did a thing with moré pain
Than write this, to the which ye me constrain." 882

* * * * *

And right as they declaréd this mattére,
Lo! Troilus right at the streetés end
Came riding with his tenthé sum ifere[3]
All softély, and thitherward 'gan bend
There as they sat, as was his way to wend[4]
To palace-ward, and Pandare him aspied,
And said, "Niece, see who cometh heré ride! 889

"O fly not in! he seeth us I suppose,
Lest he may thinken that ye him eschew."[5]
"Nay, nay," quod she, and wax'd as red as rose.
With that he 'gan her humbly to salue
With dreadful cheer,[6] and oft his hués mue,[7]
And up his look he debonairly cast,
And beckéd[8] on Pandare, and forth by pass'd. 896

God wot if he sat on his horse aright,
Or goodly was beseen that ilké day;
God wot whe'r[9] he were like a manly knight;
What should I dretch,[10] or tell of his array?
Creseida, which that all these thingés sey,[11]
To tell in short, her likéd all ifere,[12]
His person, his array, his look, his cheer, 903

His goodly manner and his gentleness,
So well, that never sith that she was born
Ne hadden she such ruth of his distress;
And how so she hath hard been here beforn,
To God hope I she hath now caught a thorn,
She shall not pull it out this nexté week;
God send her more such thornés on to pick! 910

Pandarus, which that stood her fasté by,
Felt th' iron hot, and he began to smite,
And saidé; "Niece, I pray you heartily

[1] Ibeat—stamped: see note to *Knight's Tale*, ver. 121. [2] Wisly—surely. [3] Tenthe sum ifere—in company with some ten of his attendants: a Saxon idiom. [4] Wend — go. [5] Eschew — avoid. [6] Dreadful cheer—timid manner. [7] Hues mue—complexion changes. [8] Becked — nodded. [9] Whe'r — whether. [10] Dretch — trouble. [11] Sey— saw. [12] Liked all ifere—was pleased with altogether.

Tell me that I shall asken you alite ;[1]
A woman that were of his death to wite,[2]
Without his guilt,[3] but for her lack of ruth,
Were it well done?" Quod she, "Nay, by my truth." 917

"God help me so, quod he, ye say me soth,
Ye feelen well yourself that I naught lie.
Lo! yond' he rideth." Quod she, "Yea, so he doth."
"Well, quod Pandare, as I have told you thrie,[4]
Let be your nicéty[5] and your follý,
And speak with him in easing of his heart :
Let nicéty not do you bothé smart." 924

"But thereon was to heavén and to done,[6]
Considering all thing it may not be."
"And why? for shame." "And it were eke too soon
To granten him so great a liberty."
For plainly her intent, as sayéd she,
Was, for to love him unwist[7] if she might,
And guerdon[8] him with nothing but with sight. 931

But Pandarus thought "It shall not be so;
If that I may, this nice[9] opinión
Shall not be holden fully yearés two."
What should I make of this a long sermón?
He must assent on that conclusión
As for the time, and when that it was eve,
And all was well, he rose and took his leave. 938

And on his way full fast homewárd he sped,
And right for joy he felt his heart to dance,
And Troilus he found alone abed,
That lay, as do those lovers, in a trance,
Betwixen hope and dark disesperance.[10]
But Pandarus right at his in-coming
He sang, as who saith, "Lo! somewhat I bring;" 945

And saidé; "Who is in his bed so soon
Yburied thus?"—"It am I, friend," quod he.
"Who? Troilus! nay, help me so the moon,
Quod Pandarus; thou shalt up rise and see
A charm that was ysent right now to thee;
The which can healen thee of thine access,[11]
If thou do forthwith all thy business."[12] 952

[1] Alite—a little. [2] Wite—know. [3] Guilt—fault. [4] Thrie—thrice. [5] Nicety—fastidiousness. [6] To heaven and to done: the Glossary to the Ed. 1598, interprets this passage—"to heave and to shove:" notwithstanding this assistance, however, I acknowledge myself unable to put the sentence into intelligible prose. [7] Unwist—unknown. [8] Guerdon—reward. [9] Nice—foolish. [10] Disesperance—despair. [11] Access, (Fr.)—fever, ague. [12] All thy business—perform all thy duty.

"Yea, through the might of God," quod Troilus.
And Pandarus 'gan him the letter take,
And said; "Pardé God hath yholpen us:
Have here a light, and look on all these black."[1]
But often 'gan the heart to glad and quake
Of Troilus while he it 'gan to read,
So as the wordes gave him hope or drede.[2] 959

But, finally, he took all for the best
That she him wrote, for somewhat he beheld
On which he thought he might his hearté rest,
Al' covered she[3] the wordés under shield;
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That what for hope, and Pandarus' behest,[4]
His greaté woe foryede[5] he at the least. 966

But, as we may all day ourselven see,
Through moré wood or coal, the moré fire;
Right so increase of hope of what it be,
Therewith full oft encreaseth eke desire;
Or, as an oak cometh of a little spire,[6]
So through this letter which that she him sent
Encreasen 'gan desire, of which he brent.[7] 973

Wherefore I say alway, that day and night
This Troilus 'gan to desiren more
Than he did erst[8] through hope, and did his might
To pressen on, as by Pandárus' lore,[9]
And writen to her of his sorrows sore
From day to day: he let it naught refreid[10]
That by Pandare he somewhat wrote or said. 980

* * * * *

[This indefatigable friend proposes yet farther to serve him by engaging Deiphobus, Troilus's brother, in the cause of Creseida, who has been traduced by one, "false Poliphete." Deiphobus not only consents personally to stand her friend, but in addition promises to bring into the party his brother Hector and Helen, that their presence and society may give her consequence with her adversaries, and adds:—]

"Speak thou thyself also to Troilus
On my behalf, and pray him with us dine."
"Sir, all this shall be done," quod Pandarus,
And took his leave, and never 'gan to fine,[11]
But to his niece's house as straight as line
He came, and found her from the meat arise,
And set him down, and spake right in this wise: 987

[1] Black — lines or letters, understood. [2] Drede — doubt. [3] Al' covered she—although she covered. [4] Behest—promise. [5] Foryede --forewent. [6] Spire — stake, or twig: probably a corruption of spear. [7] Brent — burned. [8] Erst — before. [9] Lore—learning, experience. [10] Refreid—grow cold. [11] 'Gan to fine—paused.

He said, "O very God! so have I run,
Lo! niecé mine, see ye not how I sweat?
I n'ot[1] whether ye moré thank me conne;[2]
Be ye not 'ware how that false Poliphete
Is now about eftsonés for to plete,[3]
And bringen on you advocacies new?"
"I?—no," quod she, and changéd all her hue. 994

"What! is he more about me for to dretch,[4]
And do me wrong? what shall I do? alas!
Yet of himselfen nothing would I retch[5]
N'ere it for Antenor and Æneas,
That be his friendés in such manner case;
But for the love of God, mine uncle dear!
No force of that,[6] let him have all ifere;[7] 1001

"Withouten that I have enough for us."
"Nay, quod Pandare, it shall nothíng be so,
For I have been right now at Deíphobus,*
At Hector, and mine other lordés mo,
And shortly maked each of them his foe,
That by my thrift[8] he shall it never win
For aught he can, when so that he begin." 1008

And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphóbus, of his owné courtesy,
Came her to pray in his proper persón
To hold him on the morrow company
At dinner, which she ne would not deny,
But goodly 'gan to his prayér obey:
He thankéd her, and went upon his way. 1015

When this was done this Pandarus anon,
(To tellen in short) forth he 'gan to wend
To Troilus as still as any stone,
And all this thing he told him ord[9] and end,
And how that he Deiphóbus 'gan to blend,[10]
And said him; "Now is time of that ye con[11]
To bear the bell to-morrow', and all is won. 1022

"Thou shalt go overnight, and that as blive,
Unto Deiphóbus' house, as thee to play,
Thy malady away the bet to drive;

[1] N'ot—know not. [2] Thank me conne—whether you are able to make me a return. [3] Plete—plead. [4] Dretch—trouble. [5] Retch—care. [6] No force of that—no matter for that. [7] Ifere—together. [8] Thrift — management. [9] Ord — point. [10] Blend — draw aside. [11] Con—know how.

* The first syllable of Deiphobus is to be pronounced as a diphthong—Dyphobus.

For why? thou seemest sick, the soth[1] to say;
Soon after that, down in thy bed thee lay,
And say thou may'st no longer up endure,
And lie right there and bide thine áventure. 1029

"Say that the fever is wont thee to take
The samé time, and lasten till a-morrow;
And let see now how well thou canst it make,
For pardé, sick is he that is in sorrow:
Go now, farewell, and Venus here to borrow[2]
I hope, and thou[3] this purpose holdé firm,
Thy grace she shall thee fully there confirm." 1036

What needeth it to tellen all the cheer
That Deíphobus unto his brother made,
Or his access,[4] or his sicklý mannére,
How men go him with clothés for to lade
When he was laid, and how men would him glade?
But all for naught; he held forth aye the wise
That ye have heard Pandáre ere this devise.[5] 1043

But certain is ere Troilus him laid,
Deiphóbus had prayéd him overnight
To be a friend and helping to Creseid';
God wot that he that granted anon right
To be her fullé friend with all his might:
But such a need was it to pray him thenne[6]
As for to bidden a wood man to renne.[7] 1050

The morrow came, and nighen 'gan the time
Of mealtide, when that the fair Queen Helén
Shope her to be an hour after prime
With Deíphobus, to whom she n'oldé feign,
But as his sister homely, soth to sain,
She came to dinner in her plain intent;
But God and Pandare wist all what this meant. 1057

Came eke Creseid' all innocent of this,
Antigoné her niece and Tarba' also:
But fly we now prolixity best is,[8]
For love of God, and let us fast ygo
Right to th' effect withouten talés mo,
Why all this folk assembled in this place,
And let us of their saluingés pace.[9] 1063

Great honour did them Deíphobus certáin,
And fed them well with all that might them like,

[1] Soth — truth. [2] Borrow — engage. [3] And thou — if thou. [4] Access—fever. [5] Devise—describe. [6] Thenne—thence. [7] Renne —run. [8] Prolixity best is — this is a fair specimen of Chaucer's involution of a sentence, which when arranged, reads thus: "But best is that we now fly prolixity. [9] Saluinges pace — pass their salutations.

But evermore, alas! was his refrain,[1]
"My goodé brother, Troilus the sick,
Li'th yet;" and therewithal he 'gan to sike,[2]
And after that he painéd him to glad
Them as he might, and cheeré good he made. 1070

Complainéd eke Helén of his sickness
So faithfully, that pity was to hear,
And every wight 'gan waxen for axes
A leech anon,[3] and said; "In this mannére
Men curen folk; this charm I will thee lere:"[4]
But there sat one, al' list her not[5] to teach,
That thought, "Yet best coulden I be his leech."

After complaint him 'gonnen they to praise, 1078
As folk do yet when some wight hath begun
To praise a man, and up with praise him raise
A thousand fold yet higher than the sun;
He is, he can, that few other lordés con;[6]
And Pandarus, of that they would affirm,
He naught forgot their praising to confirm. 1084

Heard all this thing fair Creseid' well enough,
And every word 'gan for to notify,
For which with sober cheer her hearté laugh;
For who is that ne would her glorify
To mowen such a knight do live or die?[7]
But all pass I, lest ye too long ydwell;
But for one fine[8] is all that e'er I tell. 1091

The timé came from dinner for to rise,
And as them ought, arisen evereachone,
And 'gan awhile of this and that devise;[9]
But Pandarus brake all this speech anon,
And saidé to Deiphobus; "Will ye gone,
If it your will be, as I erst you pray'd,
To speaken of the needés of Creseid'?" 1098

Helen, which that by the hand her held,
Took first the tale, and saidé; "Go we blive;"[10]
And goodly on Creseida she beheld,
And sayed; "Jovis! let him never thrive
That doth you harm, and reve him soon of live,

[1] Refrain, (Fr.)—the burthen of his song. [2] Sike—sigh. [3] Waxen or axes a leech anon—increase their inquiries for a physician immediately. [4] Lere—learn. [5] Al' list her not—although she did not choose. [6] Few other lordes con—he is, he knows what few other nobles do. [7] Live or die—for who would not praise her to be able to make such a knight live or die? [8] Fine—end. [9] Devise—contrive. [10] Blive—quickly.

And give me sorrow but he shall it rue,
If that I may, and allé folk be true." 1105

"Tell thou thy niecés case," quod Defphobus
To Pandarus, "for thou canst best it tell."
"My lordés and my ladies, it stant thus;
What should I longer, quod he, do you dwell?"
He rung them out a process[1] like a bell
Upon her foe, that hight was Polyphete,
So heinous, that men mighten on it spit. 1112

Answér'd of this each worse of them than other,
And Polyphete they gonnen thus to waren,[2]
A-hangéd be such one, were he my brother,
And so he shall, for it ne may not varien:[3]
What should I longer in this talé tarrien?
Plainély all at onés they her highten[4]
To be her friend in all that e'er they mighten. 1119

Spake then Helén, and said to Pandarus,
"Wot aught my lord my brother of this mattére,
I mean Hectór, or wot it Troilus?"
He said her, "Yea; but will ye me now hear?
Me think thus, sith that Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye would assent,
She told him herself all this ere she went; 1126

"For he will have the more her grief at heart,
Because lo, she a worthy lady is;
And by your will I will but in right start,
And do you wete,[5] and that anon iwis,
If that he sleep or will aught hear of this:"
And in he leap'd, and said him in his ear,
"God have thy soul! for brought have I thy bier."

To smilen of this 'gan then Troilus; 1134
And Pandarus, withouten reckoning,
Out went to Helen and Deiphóbus,
And said them; "So there be no tarrying,
No moré press,[6] he will well that ye bring
Creseid', my lady, that is now here,
And as he may endure, he will her hear. 1140

"But well ye wot the chamber is but lite,[7]
And fewé folk may lightly[8] make it warm;
Now looketh ye, for I will have no wite.[9]
To bring in press[6] that might I ydo him harm,
Or him diseasen for my better arm;[10]

[1] Process—charge. [2] Waren—threaten. [3] May not varien—cannot change. [4] Highten—promise. [5] Do you wete—let you know, and that indeed immediately. [6] Press—crowd, company. [7] Lite—small. [8] Lightly—easily. [9] Wite—blame. [10] Better arm—or render him unfit for my better security.

Bet were it she abidé till eftsonés[1]
Now looketh ye, that knowen what to done is. 1147

"I say for me best is, as I can know,
That no wight in ne wendé but ye tway,
But it were I, for I can in a throw,[2]
Rehearse her case unlike that she can say,
And after this she may onés him pray
To be good lord in short, and take her leave;
This may not muchel of his ease him reve.[3] 1154

"And eke, for she is strange,[4] he will forbear
His ease, which that him daren not for you;
Eke other thing that toucheth not to hear
He will it tell, I wot it well right now,
That secret is, and for the townés prow."[5]
And they, that knew nothíng of his intent,
Withouten more to Troilus in they went. 1161

Helén in all her goodly softly wise
'Gan him salute and womanly to play,
And said; "Iwis ye must algate[6] arise;
Now, fairé brother, be all whole I pray;"
And her arm right over his shoulder lay,
And him with all her wit to recomfórt;
As she best could, she 'gan him to disport. 1168

So after this, quod she, "We you beseek,
My dearé brother! Deíphobus and I,
For love of God, and so doth Pandare eke,
To be good lord and friend right heartily
Unto Creseída, which that certainly
Receivéd wrong, as wot well here Pandare,
That can her case well bet' than I declare." 1175

This Pandarus 'gan new his tongue affile,[7]
And all her case rehearse, and that anon:
When it was said, soon after in a while
Quod Troilus; "As soon as I may gone,
I will right fain[8] with all my might be one,
Have God my truth, her cause for to sustain:"
"Now good thrift[9] have ye," quod Helén the Queen.

Quod Pandarus, "And it your will ybe[10] 1183
That she may take her leave ere that she go?"
"O, ellés God forbid it! then quod he,
If that she vouchsafen for to do so."
And with that word, quod Troilus, "Ye two,

[1] Eftsones — some time afterwards. [2] Throw — short time. [3] Reve—bereave. [4] Strange—because she is nice, difficult. [5] Prow —advantage. [6] Algate—at all events. [7] Affile—polish. [8] Right fain—gladly. [9] Thrift—success. [10] Your will ybe—and if you please.

Deiphóbus and my sister lefe[1] and dear,
To you have I to speak of a mattére, 1189

"To be aviséd by your rede[2] the better;"
And found, as hap was, at his beddés head
The copy of a treatise and a letter
That Hector had him sent to asken redde[2]
If such a man was worthy to be dead?
Wot I not who, but in a grisly wise[3]
He prayéd them anon on it avise.[4] 1196

Deiphóbus 'gan this letter for t' unfold
In earnest great, so did Helén the Queen,
And roaming outward fast it 'gan behold,
Downward a stair, into an arbour green;
This ilké thing they readen them between,
And largély the mount'nance of an hour
They gone on it to readen and to pour. 1203

Now let them read, and turné we anon
To Pandarus, that 'gan full fasté pry
That all was well, and out he 'gan to gone
Into the 'reaté chamber', and that in hie,[5]
And sayéd; "God save all this company!
Come, niecé mine, my lady Queen Helén,
Abideth you, and eke my lordés twain. 1210

"Rise, take with you your niece Antigoné,
Or whom you list, or no force hardily;[6]
The lessé press[7] the better: come forth with me,
And looketh that ye thanken humblely
Them allé three, and when ye may goodly
Your time ysee taketh of them your leave,
Lest we too long his restés him bereave." 1217

All innocent of Pandarus' intent
Quod then Creséida; "Go we, uncle dear!"
And arm in arm inwárd with him she went,
Avising well her wordés and her cheer;[8]
And Pandarus in earnestfull mannére
Sayéd; "All folk, for Goddés love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softély you play. 1224

"Aviseth you what folk be here within,
And in what plight one is, God him amend!
And inward thus full softély begin;
Niece, I conjure and highly you defend,[9]
On his behalf, which that soul us all send,

[1] Lefe — sweet, agreeable. [2] Redde — advice. [3] Grisly wise — fearful manner. [4] Avise — consider. [5] Hie — haste. [6] No force hardily—no matter how few. [7] Press—crowd. [8] Cheer—behaviour. [9] Defend—forbid.

And in the virtue of corounés twain,
Slay not this man that hath for you this pain. 1231

"Fie on the devil! think which one he is,
And in what plight he lieth; come off anon;
Think all such tarried tide but lost it n'is,[1]
That will ye bothé say when ye be one;
And secondly, there yet devineth none
Upon you two; come off now if ye con
While folk is blent,[2] lo! all the time is won. 1238

"In titering,[3] and pursuit, and delays,
The folk devine at wagging of a stré,[4]
And though ye would have after merry days,
Then dare ye not; and why? for she and she
Spake such a word; thus lookéd he and he:
Lest time be lost I dare not with you deal,
Come off therefore, and bringeth him to heal." 1245

But now to you, ye lovers that be here,
Was Troilus not in a cankedort,[5]
That lay and might the whisp'ring of them hear?
And thought; "O Lord! right now runneth my sort[6]
Fully to die or have anon comfórt;"
And was the first time that he should her pray
Of love; O mighty God! what shall he say? 1252

BOOK III.

O BLISSFUL light! of which the beamés clear
Adorneth allé the third heaven fair,
O sunnés life! O Jovés daughter dear!
Pleasance of love! O goodly debonaire!
In gentle hearts aye ready to repair,
O very cause of hele[7] and of gladness!
Yheried[8] be thy might and thy goodness! 7

In heaven and hell, in earth and the salt sea,
Is felt thy might, if that I well discern,
As man, bird, beast, fish, herb, and greené tree,
They feel in timés with vapóur etern:
God loveth, and to love he will nought werne;[9]

[1] Lost it n'is—all such delayed tide is but lost. [2] Blent—gone aside. [3] Titering—courtship. [4] Devine at wagging of a stre—foretell by the shaking of a straw. [5] Cankedort—woful plight. [6] Sort—lot. [7] Hele—health. [8] Yheried—praised. [9] Werne—refuse.

And in this world no livés creáture
Withouten love is wrought or may endure. 14

Ye, Jovis, first to thilk affectés[1] glad,
Through which that thingés liven all and be,
Commendeden and amorous him made
On mortal thing, and, as ye list, aye ye
Gave him in love ease or adversity,
And in a thousand formés down him sent
For love in earth, and whom you list he hent.[2] 21

Ye, fierce Mars appeasen of his ire,
And as you list ye maken heartés digne;[3]
Algatés[4] them that ye will set a-fire
They dreaden shame, and vices they resign;
Ye doen them courteous be,[5] fresh, and benign,
And high or low after a wight entendeth[6]
The joyés that he hath, your might it sendeth. 28

Ye holden regne[7] and house in unity,
Ye sothfast[8] cause of friendship be also;
Ye knowen all thilk cover'd quality
Of thingés which that folk on wondren so[9]
When they cannot construe how it may go
She loveth him, or why he loveth her,
As why this fishé n'ot that com'th to wear.[10] 35

Ye folk a law have set in universe,
And this know I by them that lovers be,
That whoso striveth with you hath the worse:
Now lady bright, for thy benignity,
At reverence of them that serven thee,
Whose clerk I am, so teacheth me devise[11]
Some joy of that is felt in thy servíce: 42

Ye in my naked heartés sentiment
Inhilde,[12] and do me show of thy sweetness,
Caliope! thy voice be now presént,
For now is need; seest thou not my distress
How I must tell anon right the gladness
Of Troilus to Venus herying?[13]
To which gladness who need hath, God him bring? 49

Lay all this meanwhile this sad Troilus
Recording his lesson in this mannere,

[1] Affectes — affections. [2] Hent — attacked, caught. [3] Digne — worthy. [4] Algates — always. [5] Doen them courteous be — cause them to become courteous. [6] Entendeth—attendeth. [7] Regne — kingdom. [8] Sothfast — true, steady, firm. [9] On wondren so—so wonder at. [10] Wear—a trap for fish. [11] Devise—describe. [12] Inhilde—infuse. [13] Herying—praising, worshipping.

"Mafay,[1] thought he, thus will I say and thus,
Thus will I plain unto my lady dear,
That word is good, and this shall be my cheer,
This n'ill I not forgetten in no wise:"
God lene him worken[2] as he can devise. 56

And, Lord! so that his heart began to quappe[3]
Hearing her come, and short 'gan for to sike;[4]
And Pandarus, that led her by the lap,[5]
Came near, and 'gan in at the curtain pike,[6]
And sayéd, "God do bote[7] on all the sick!
See who is here you comen to visite;
Lo! here is she that is your death to wite."[8] 63

Therewith it seeméd as he wept almost.
"Aha! quod Troilus, so ruthfully,
Where me be woe O mighty God! thou wot'st:
Who is all there I see not truély."
"Sir, (quod Creseid') it is Pandare and I."
"Ye, sweeté heart, alas! I may not rise
To kneel, and do you honour in some wise." 70

And dresséd him upwárd;[9] and she right tho[10]
'Gan both her handés soft upon him lay.
"O, for the love of God do ye not so
To me! (quod she). Ey, what is this to see!
Sir, comen' am I to you for causes tway,
First you to thank, and of your lordship eke
Continuance I wouldé you beseke."[11] 77

This Troilus, that heard his lady pray
Of lordship, him wax'd neither quick nor dead,
Nor might one word for shame unto it say,
Although men shoulden smiten off his head,
But Lord! so he wax'd suddenly all red;
And, Sir, his lesson that he weendé conne[12]
To prayen her, is through his wit yrun. 84

Creseid' all this espyed well enough,
For she was wise, and lov'd him ne'er the less,
All n'ere he' in all apert, or made it tough,[13]
Or was too bold to sing a foolés mass;
But when his shame began somewhat to pass
His reason, as I may my rhymés hold,
I will you tell as teachen bookés old. 91

[1] Mafay—ma foi, by my faith. [2] God lene him worken—God ant he may work. [3] Quappe—tremble. [4] Sike—sob. [5] Lap—ppet. [6] Pike—peep. [7] Do bote—help. [8] To wite—to answer, , to blame for. [9] Dressed him upward—prepared to arise. Tho—then. [11] Beseke—beseech. [12] Weende conne—thought : knew by heart. [13] Tough—although he was not open withal, or as over pains-taking.

In changéd voice, right for his very dread,
Which voice eke quoke, and thereto his mannere
Goodly abash'd, and now his hués red
Now pale, unto Creseid' his lady dear,
With look downcast, and humbly yolden cheer,[1]
Lo the alderfirst[2] word that him astart,
Was twicé, "Mercy, mercy, my dear heart!" 98

And stint awhile, and when he might out bring
The nexté word, was; "God wot for I have
As faithfully as I have had conning[3]
Been yourés all, God so my soulé save,
And shall, till that I woful wight be grave,[4]
And though I dare nor can unto you plain,[5]
Iwis[6] I suffer not the lessé pain. 105

"Thus much as now, ah womanliké wife!
I may out bring, and if this you displease
That shall I wreak upon mine owné life
Right soon I trow, and do your heart an ease,
If with my death your heart I may appease;
But since that ye have heard me something say,
Now retch[7] I never how sooné that I dey."[8] 112

Therewith his manly sorrow to behold
It might have made a heart of stone to rue,
And Pandare wept as he to water would,
And pokéd ever' his niecé new and new,[9]
And sayed, "Woe begone been heartés true;
For love of God make of this thing an end,
Or slay us both at once ere that ye wend."[10] 119

"I, what? (quod she.) By God and by my truth
I n'ot[11] never what ye wilné that I say."
"Eh, what? (quod he) that ye have on him ruth
For Goddés love, and doeth him not to die."
"Now then thus (quod she) I will him pray
To tellen me the fine of his intent;
Yet wist I never well what that he meant." 1[illegible]

"What that I mean, O my sweet hearté dear!
(Quod Troilus) O goodly fresh and free!
That with the streamés of your eyen clear
Ye woulden sometime friendly on me see,
And then agreén that I may be he,
Withouten branch of vice on any wise,
In truth alway to do you my servíce, 13[illegible]

[1] Humbly yolden cheer—humbly yielded manner. [2] Alderfirst—[illegible] the very first. [3] Conning—skill. [4] Be grave—be laid in the grave. [5] Plain—complain. [6] Iwis—truly. [7] Retch—care. [8] Dey—die. [9] New and new—again and again thrust his niece. [10] Wend—go. [11] N'ot—know not.

"As to my lady right, and chief resort,
With all my wit and all my diligence,
And I to have right as you list comfórt,
Under your yard[1] egal to mine offence,
As death, if that I breaken your defence,
And that ye deigné me so much honóur
Me to commanden aught in any hour, 140

"And I to be your very humble, true,
Secret,[2] and in my painés patient,
And ever to desiren freshly new
To serven, and be aye like diligent,
And with good heart all wholly your talent[3]
Receiven well how soré that me smart:
Lo, this mean I, O mine own sweeté heart!" 147

* * * * *

With that she 'gan her eyen on him cast
Full easily and full debonairly,
Avising her,[4] and hied her not too fast
With ne'er a word, but said him softély,
"Mine honour safe, I will well truély,
And in such form as ye can now devise,
Receiven him fully to my servíce; 154

"Beseeching him, for Goddés love, that he
Would in honóur of truth and gentleness,
As I well mean, eke meanen well to me,
And mine honóur with wit and business[5]
Aye keep; and if I may do him gladness
From hennésforth, iwis I n'ill not feign:
Now be all whole, no longer ye ne plain. 161

"But nathéless this warn I you (quod she),
A kingés son although ye be iwis,[6]
Yet ye shall no more havé sov'reignty
Of me in love than right in that case is;
Ne n'ill I forbear if ye do amiss
To wrathen[7] you, and while that ye me serve
Cherish you right after that ye deserve. 168

"And shortély, dear heart, and all my knight!
Be glad, and draweth you to lustiness,[8]
And I shall truly, with all my full might,
Your bitter touren all to sweeténess.
If I be she that may do you gladness;

[1] Yard—staff, rod (of correction). [2] Secret—confidant. [3] Your talent receiven well—in good will receive your affection. [4] Avising her—considering. [5] Wit and business—skill and diligence. [6] Iwis—truly. [7] Wrathen—be angry with. [8] Lustiness—delight, joy.

For every woe ye shall recover bliss."
And him in armés took, and 'gan him kiss. 175

* * * * *

With that Helén and also Deíphobus
Then comen upward, right at the stairés end,
And, Lord! so then 'gan groanen Troilus,
His brother and his sister for to blend,[1]
(Quod Pandarus) "It time is that we wend;[2]
Take, niecé mine, your leave at them all three,
And let them speak, and cometh forth with me." 182

She took her leave at them full thriftily,[3]
As she well could, and they her reverence
Unto the full ydidden heartily,
And wonder well speaken in her absence
Of her, in praising of her excellence,
Her governance, her wit, and her mannere
Commendeden, that it joy was to hear. 189

Now let her wend unto her owné place,
And turnen we to Troilus again,
That 'gan full lightly of the letter pace[4]
That Deíphobus had in the garden seen;
And of Helén and him he wouldé fain
Delivered been, and sayéd that him lest
To sleep, and after talés[5] have a rest. 196

Helen him kiss'd, and took her leave as blive,[6]
Deiphóbus eke, and home went every wight,
And Pandarus as fast as he may drive
To Troilus then came as liné right,[7]
And on a pallet all that gladdé night
By Troilus he lay with merry cheer,
And well was them that they weren yfere.[8] 203

When every wight was voided but they two,
And all the doorés weren fast yshet—
To tell in short, withouten wordés mo,
This Pandarus withouten any let[9]
Up rose, and on his beddés side him set,
And 'gan to speaken in a sober wise
To Troilus as I shall you devise.[10] 210

* * * * *

[The result of this discourse is to conjure Troilus, on behalf of his niece, whom he has been the means of placing under his protection, never to betray or desert her. "For (says he)

[1] Blend—blind. [2] Wend—go. [3] Thriftily—discreetly. [4] Pace—pass over. [5] Tales—talking. [6] As blive—as quickly as possible. [7] As line right—as straight as a line. [8] Weren yfere—and well was it for them that they were together. [9] Let—delay. [10] Devise—describe.

That man is unborn I dare well swear,
That ever wist that she yet did amiss:
But woe is me that I that cause all this
May thinken that she is my niecé dear,
And I her uncle', and traitor eke ifere."[1]

In a manly strain of fervid eloquence, Troilus assures his friend of the truth and fidelity of his heart, and their conversation thus concludes:—]

And 'gan his look on Pandarus up cast
Full soberly, and friendly on to see,
And sayed; "Friend, in Aprilis the last,
As well thou wot'st, if it remember thee,
How nigh the death for woe thou foundé me,
And how thou didest all thy business
To know of me the cause of my distress; 217

"Thou wot'st how long I it forbare to say
To thee that art the man that I best trist,[2]
And peril none was to thee to bewray,
That wist[3] I well; but tell me if thee list,[4]
Sith I so loath was that thyself it wist,
How durst I moré tellen of this mattere
That quaké now though no wight may us hear? 224

"But nathéless, by that God I thee swear.
That as him list[5] may all this world govérn,
And if I lie Achilles with his speare
Mine hearté cleave, all were my life eterne,
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne[6]
Would it bewray, or durst, or should, or conne,[7]
For all the good that God made under sun; 231

"That rather die I would and determine,
As thinketh me now, stockéd[8] in prisón,
In wretchedness, in filth, and in vermíne,
Captive to cruel King Agamemnon;
And this in all the temples of this town,
Upon the goddés all, I will thee swear,
To-morrow day, if that thee liketh hear. 238

"And that thou hast so much ydone for me
That I ne may it nevermore deserve,
This know I well, all might I now for thee
A thousand timés on a morrow starve;[9]
I can no more but that I will thee serve
Right as thine own slave, whither so thou wend,
For evermore unto my livés end. 245

[1] Ifere—together, at the same time. [2] Trist—trust. [3] Wist—ew. [4] List—please. [5] As him list—that can govern this world he pleases. [6] Yerne—early. [7] Conne—am able. [8] Stocked—nfined. [9] Starve—die.

"But here with all my heart I thee beseech
That never' in me thou deemé such follý:
As I shall say, me thoughté by thy speech,
That this which thou me dost for company
I should weenen[1] it were a 'villainy;'
I am not wood[2] all if I lew'd[3] ybe:
It is not so, that wot I well pardé. 252

* * * * *

"But sith that thou hast done me this servíce
My life to save, and for no hope of meed,
So for the love of God this great emprise
Perform it out, for now is the most need;
For high and low, withouten any drede,[4]
I will alway thine hestés[5] allé keep:
Have now good night, and let us bothé sleep." 259

Thus held them each of other well apaid,[6]
That all the world ne might it bet[7] amend,
And on the morrow, when they were array'd
Each to his owné needes 'gan intend;[8]
But Troilus, though as the fire he brende[9]
For sharp desire of hope and of pleasance,
He not forgot his good wise governance; 266

But in himself with manhood 'gan restrain
Each rakel[10] deed and each unbridled cheer,
That all that liven, sothé for to sain,
Ne should have wist by word or by mannere
What that he meant as touching this mattere,
From every wight as far as is the cloud,
He was so wise, and well dissimul'n could. 273

And all the while which that I now devise[11]
This was his life, with all his fullé might,
By day he was in Martés high servíce,
That is to say, in armés as a knight,
And for the more part all the longé night
He lay and thought how that he might yserve
His lady best, her thank[12] for to deserve. 280

N'ill[13] I not swear, although he layé soft,
That in his thought he n'as[14] somewhat diseaséd,
Ne that he turnéd on his pillows oft,
And would of that him misséd have been easéd;
But in such case men be not alway pleaséd

[1] Weenen—think, conclude. [2] Wood—mad. [3] Lewed—ig[illegible]no-rant. [4] Drede—doubt. [5] Hestes—commands. [6] Apaid—satis[illegible]ed. [7] Bet—better. [8] Intend—attend. [9] Brende—burned. [10] Rake[illegible]el-rash. [11] Devise—describe. [12] Thank—reward. [13] N'ill—nor [illegible]ill. [14] N'as—was not.

For aught I woté, no more than was he,
That can I deem of possibility. 287

But certain is, to purpose for to go,
That in this while, as written is in geste,[1]
He saw his lady sometime, and also
She with him spake when that she durst and lest,[2]
And by their both avise,[3] as was the best,
Appointeden full warely in this need,
So as they durst, how they woulden proceed. 294

But it was spoken in so short a wise,
In such await[4] alway, and in such fear,
Lest any wight devinen or devise[5]
Would of them two, or to it lay an ear,
That all this world so lefe to them ne were[6]
As that Cupido would them gracé send
To maken of their purpose right an end. 301

But thilké little that they spake or wrought
His wisé ghost[7] took aye of all such heed,
It seeméd her[8] he wisté what she thought
Withouten word, so that it was no need
To bid him aught to do or aught forbid,
For which she thought that love, al' come it late,[9]
Of allé joy had opened her the gate. 308

And shortly to this process for to pace,[10]
So well his work and wordés he beset,
That he so full stood in his lady's grace
That twenty thousand timés ere she let[11]
She thankéd God she ever with him met;
So could he him govérn in such servíce
That all the world ne might it bet[12] devise; 315

For why? she found him so discreet in all,
So secret, and eke of such obeisance,
That well she felt he was to her a wall
Of steel, and shield from every displeasance,
That to ybeen in his good governance,
So wise he was, she was no more afearéd;
I mean as far as it ought been requeréd. 322

And Pandarus to quick'n alway the fire
Was ever iliké prest[13] and diligent;
To ease his friend was set all his desire;

[1] Geste—history. [2] Lest—pleased. [3] Avise—counsel. [4] Await—[illegible]ution, watching. [5] Devinen or devise—conjecture or relate, speak [illegible]. [6] So lefe to them ne were—that all this world would not be so [illegible]easant to them. [7] Ghost—spirit, mind. [8] It seemed her—it ap[illegible]eared to her that, without a word, he knew what she thought. Al' come it late—although it had come late. [10] Pace—pass, pro[illegible]ed. [11] Let—ceased. [12] Bet—better. [13] Prest, (Fr. *prêt*)—ready, [illegible]tive.

He shove aye on; he to and fro was sent,
He letters bare when Troilus was absent,
That never man as in his friendés need
Ne bare him bet than he withouten drede.[1] 329

* * * * *

Now is there little more for to be done
But Pandare up, and, shortly for to sain,
Right soon upon the changing of the moon,
When lightless is the world a night or twain,
And that the welkin shope[2] him for to rain,
He straight a-morrow unto his niecé went,
Ye have well heard the fine[3] of his intent. 336

When he was come he 'gan anon to play,
As he was wont, and of himself to jape,[4]
And finally he swore, and 'gan her say
By this and that, she should him not escape,
No longer do him after her to cape,[5]
But certainly that she must, by her leave,
Come suppen in his house with him at eve. 343

At which she laugh'd, and 'gan her first excuse,
And said; "It raineth, lo! how should I gone?"
"Let be (quod he) nor stand not thus to muse;
This must be done, ye shall come there anon."
So at the last hereof they fell at one,[6]
Or ellés soft he swore her in her ear,
He n'oldé never comen there she were.[7] 350

Soon after this she unto him 'gan rowne,[8]
And askéd him if Troilus were there?
He swore her Nay, for he was out of town,
And said; "What niece, I 'pose[9] that he were there,
You durst nevér have the moré fear?
For rather than men might him there espy
Me lever[10] were a thousand fold to die." 357

Naught list mine author fully to declare
What that she thought when that he said her so,
That Troilus was out of town ifare,[11]
And if he saidé thereof soth[12] or no;
But that without await[13] with him to go

[1] Drede—doubt. [2] Shope—prepared. [3] Fine—end. [4] Jape—jest. [5] Cape—I can find no interpretation of this word; but, as *capel* signifies a *horse*, I conjecture that this may be a verb derived from the noun, *to ride*,—and hence the term *to caper*. [6] Fell at one—they agreed. [7] There she were—he would never come where she was. [8] Rowne—whisper, murmur. [9] 'pose—suppose. [10] Lever—rather. [11] Ifare—fared, gone. [12] Soth—true. [13] Await—delay.

She granted him, sith he her that besought,
And as his niece obeyéd as her ought. 364

But nathéless yet 'gan she him beseech,
Although with him to go it was no fear,
For to beware of gofish[1] people's speech,
That dreamen thingés which that never were,
And well avisen him whom he brought there;
And said him; "Eme, since I must on you trist
Look all be well; I do now as you list." 371

He swore her this by stockés and by stones,
And by the goddés that in heaven dwell,
Or ellés were him lever soul and bones
With Pluto King as deepé been in hell
As Tantalus; what shoulden I more tell?
When all was well he rose and took his leave,
And she to supper came when it was eve, 378

With a certain number of her owné men,
And with her faiér niece Antigoné,
And other of her women nine or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowen ye?
But Troilus, that stood and might it see
Throughout a little window in a stew,[2]
There he beshut, till midnight was, in mew,[3] 385

Unwist of every wight but of Pandare.
But to the point. Now when that she was come
With allé joy, and all her friends in fare,[4]
Her eme[5] anon in armés hath her nome,[6]
And after to the supper all and some,
When as time was, full soft they them yset,
God wot there was no dainty fare to fet.[7] 392

And after supper gonnen they to rise,
At easé well, with hearts full fresh and glad,
And well was him that couldé best devise
To liken[8] her, or that her laughen made:
He sung, she play'd; he told a tale of Wade;

[1] Gofish, (Fr. *goffe*)—dull, gossiping. [2] Stew, (Sax. and Fr.)—ttle room, closet. [3] In mew—confined. [4] In fare—had gone in. Eme—uncle. [6] Nome—taken. [7] Fet—fetch. [8] Liken—please.

V. 397. *Tale of Wade.*] In the days of Chaucer, a story was in ɔgue concerning "Wade and his boot," called "Guingelot." peght, in alluding to it, says, "because the matter is long and ıbulous, I pass it over:" and I must do the same, though not for ɜe same cause, but from my not knowing anything at all about ɜe matter. It is here evidently mentioned proverbially, as imlying that some tale of wonder was related.

But at the last, as every thing hath end,
She took her leave, and needés would thence wend.[1]

But, O fortúne! executrix of wierdés,[2] 400
O influences of these heavens high!
Soth is, that under God ye be our hierdés,[3]
Though to us beastés be the causes wry;[4]
This mean I now, for she 'gan homeward hie;
But execute was all beside her leve[5]
The goddés will, for which she must believe. 406

The benté mooné with her horns all pale,
Saturn and Jove, in Cancer joinéd were,
That such a rain from heaven 'gan avale,[6]
That every manner woman that was there
Had of that smoky rain a very fear;
At which Pandare then laughéd, and said then,
"Now were it time a lady to go henn? 413

"But goodé niece, if I might ever please
You any thing, then pray I you (quod he)
To do mine heart as now so great an ease
As for to dwell here all this night with me;
For why? this is your owné house pardé,
For by my truth, I say it not in game,
To wend[1] as now it were to me a shame." 420

Creseida, which that could[7] as muchel good
As half a world, took heed of his prayére,
And since it rain'd, and all was in a flood,
She thought, "As good cheap[8] may I dwellen here,
And grant it gladly with a friendés cheer,
And have a thank, as grudge and then abide;
For home to go it may not well betide. 427

"I will (quod she), mine uncle lefe[9] and dear!
Since that you list; it skill is[10] to be so,
I am right glad with you to dwellen here;
I saidé but in game that I would go."
"Iwis[11] grand mercy! niecé (quod he), tho;[12]
Were it a game or no, thee soth to tell,
Now am I glad since that you list to dwell." 434

Thus all is well; but then began aright
The newé joy, and all the feast again;
But Pandarus, if goodly had he might,

[1] Wend—go. [2] Wierdes—destinies. [3] Hierdes—herds, keepers. [4] Wry—crooked, untoward. [5] Leve—inclination. [6] Avale, (Fr.)—pour down. [7] Could—was able to afford. [8] As good cheap—as advantageously. [9] Lefe—pleasant, dear. [10] It skill is—it is reasonable. [11] Iwis—indeed. [12] Tho—then.

He would have hiéd her to bed full fain,
And said; "O Lord! this is a hugé rain,
This were a weather for to sleepen in,
And that I rede[1] us sooné to begin: 441

"And, niecé, wot ye where I will you lay?
For that we shall not liggen[2] far asunder,
And, for ye neither shallen, dare I say,
Hearen the noise of rainés nor of thunder,
By God right in my little closet yonder,
And I will in that outer house alone
Be warden of your women evereachone; 448

"And in this middle chamber that ye see
Shall all your women sleepen well and soft,
And there I sayéd shall yourselven be,
And if ye liggen[2] well to-night, come oft,
And careth not what weather is aloft.
Go in anon, and when so that ye lest,
Go we to sleep, I trow it be the best." 455

There n'is no moré, but hereafter soon
They drank, voided,[3] and curtains drew anon;
'Gan every wight that haddé naught to done
More in the place out of the chamber gone;
And evermore so sternély it rone,[4]
And blew therewith so wonderliké loud,
That well nigh no man hearen other could. 462

Then Pandarus, her eme,[5] right as him ought,
With women such as were her most about,
Full glad unto her beddés side her brought,
And took his leave, and 'gan full low to lout,[6]
And said; "Here at this closet door without,
Right overthwart, your women liggen[2] all,
That whom ye list of them ye may soon call." 469

So when that she was in the closet laid,
And all her women forth by ordinance
A beddé weren, there as I have said,
There n'as[7] no more to skippen nor to prance,
But bidden go to beddé with mischance,
If any wight stirring were any where,
And let them sleepen that a-bed ywere. 476

But Pandarus, that well couth each adeal[8]
The oldé dance, and every point therein,
When that he wisté that all thing was wele,

[1] Rede—advise. [2] Liggen—lie. [3] Voided—went out [4] Rone, Sax.)—rained. [5] Eme — uncle. [6] Lout — bow. [7] N'as—ne was. Couth each adeal—knew in every respect.

He thought he would upon his work begin,
And 'gan the stewe[1] door all soft unpin
As still as stone, withouten longer let;[2]
By Troilus adown right he him set. 483

And, shortly to the point right for to gone,
Of all this work he told him ord and end,
And sayed; "Make thee ready right anon,
For thou shalt into heaven bliss ywend."
"Now blissful Venus! thou me grace ysend,
(Quod Troilus) for never yet no need
Had I ere now, ne halfindeal[3] the dread." 490

(Quod Pandarus) "Ne dread thee ne'er a deal,[4]
For it shall be right as thou wilt desire;
So thrive I, this night shall I make it wele,
Or casten all the gruel in the fire."
"Yet blissful Venus! this night thou m' inspire,
(Quod Troilus) as wis[5] as I thee serve,
And ever bet and bet shall, till I sterve,[6] 497

"And if I had, O Venus full of mirth!
Aspectés bad of Mars or of Satúrn,
Or thou Combuste,[7] or let[8] were in my birth,
Thy father pray I all thilk harm disturn[9]
Of grace, and that I glad again may turn,
For love of him thou loved'st in the shaw,[10]
I mean Adon, that with the bore was slaw."[11] 504

* * * * *

(Quod Pandarus) "Thou wretched mouse's heart,
Art thou aghast so that she will thee bite?
Why, do on this furréd cloak upon thy shirt,
And follow me, for I will have thee wite;[12]
But bide, and let me go before alite,"[13]
And with that word he 'gan undo a trap,
And Troilus he brought in by the lap.[14] 511

The sterné wind so loud began to rout
That no wight other's noisé might yhear,
And they that layen at the door without
Full sikerly they slepten all ifere;[15]
And Pandarus with a full sober cheer
Go'th to the door anon withouten let[16]
There as they lay, and softély it shet; 518

[1] Stewe—closet. [2] Let—delay. [3] Halfindeal—half. [4] Ne'er a deal—not a whit, or, at all. [5] Wis—truly. [6] Sterve—die. [7] Combuste—burned: a term used in astrology, when a planet is not more than 30° 30′ distant from the sun. [8] Let—hindered. [9] Disturn—turn aside. [10] Shaw—grove. [11] Slaw—slain. [12] Wite—know. [13] Alite—a little. [14] Lap—skirt. [15] Ifere—together. [16] Let—prevention.

And as he came againward privily
His niece awoke, and asketh; "Who go'th there?"
"Mine own dear niecé! (quod he) it am I,
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fear;"
And near he came, and said her in her ear,
"No word for love of God I you beseech,
Let no wight rise and hearen of our speech." 525

"What! which way be ye comen? *Benedicite!*
(Quod she) and how, thus unwist of them all?"
"Here at this secret trappé door," (quod he.)
(Quod then Creseida) "Let me some wight call."
"Eh! God forbid that it should so befall
(Quod Pandarus) that ye such folly wrought!
They mighten deemen thing they never thought. 532

"It is not good a sleeping hound to wake,
Nor give a wight a cause for to devine:[1]
Your women sleepen all I undertake,[2]
So that for them the house men mighten mine,
And sleepen wollen till the sunné shine,
And when my tale ybrought is to an end
Unwist right as I came so will I wend. 539

"Now, niecé mine, ye shall well understand,
(Quod he) so as ye women deemen[3] all,
That for to hold in love a man in hand,
And him her lefe[4] and her dear heart to call,
And maken him a hoove above a caul;—[5]
I mean, as love another in meanwhile;—
She doth herself a shame, and him a guile. 546

"Now whereby that I tellen you all this
Ye wot yourself as well as any wight,
How that your love all fully granted is
To Troilus, that is the worthiest wight
One of the world, and thereto truth iplight;
That but it were on him along,[6] ye n'ould
Him never falsen[7] while ye liven should. 553

"Now stant it thus, that sith I from you went
This Troilus, right platly[8] for to sain,
Is through a gutter 'here forthby' went

[1] Devine — devise. [2] Undertake — feel assured. [3] Deemen — judge. [4] Lefe—beloved. [5] Hoove above a caul—hood above a cap. In P. P. fol. 4, serjeants-at-law are described in *hooves of silk*. Both words seem to be derived from the Teut. *hoofd*, a head; hood and cap being equally coverings for the head. To set a man's *hoove* is the same as to set his *cap*.—*Tyr*. [6] On him along—as regards him. [7] Never falsen—be never false to, betray. [8] Platly—plainly.

Into my chamber, come in all this rain,
Unwist of every manner wight certáin
Save of myself, as wisely[1] have I joy,
And by the faith I owe Priám of Troy : 560

"And he is come in such pain and distress,
That but he be all fully wood,[2] by this
He suddenly must fall into woodness
But if[3] God help : and the cause why is this,
He saith, him told is of a friend of his,
How that ye should love one that hight Horaste,
For sorrow of which this night shall be his last." 567

Creseidé, which that all this wonder heard,
'Gan suddenly about her heart to cold,
And with a sigh she sorrowfully' answer'd,
"Alas! I ween'd,[4] whosoe'er talés told,
My dear heart certés, eme,[5] would me not hold
So lightly false: alas! conceités wrong
What harm they do! for now live I too long. 574

"Horaste, alas! and falsen[6] Troilus!
I know him not, God help me so! (quod she.)
Alas! what wicked spirit told him thus?
Now certes, eme, to-morrow' and I him see,
I shall thereof as full excusen me
As ever did womán, if that him like."
And with that word she 'gan full sore to sike.[7] 581

* * * * *

[A long conversation hence ensues,—in the course of which Pandarus urges the desperate condition of her lover, and that she must at once set his heart at rest respecting the report of her untruth, for that he is at hand.]

"Then eme,[5] (quod she) do hereof as you list,
But ere he come I will up first arise,
And for the love of God, since all my trist
Is on you two, and ye be bothé wise,
So worketh now, in so discreet a wise,
That I honóur may have and he pleasánce,
For I am here all in your governance." 588

"That is well said, (quod he) my niecé dear!
There good thrift on that wisé gentle heart;
But lieth still, and taketh him right here,
It needeth not no farther for him start;
And each of you ease other sorrows' smart,
For love of God and Venus I thee hery,[8]
For soon hope I that we shallen be merry." 595

[1] Wisely — certainly. [2] Wood — mad. [3] But if — unless. [4] Ween'd — thought. [5] Eme — uncle. [6] Falsen — be false to. [7] Sike—sigh. [8] Hery—praise.

This Troilus full soon on knees him set
Full soberly right by her beddés head,
And in his besté wise his lady gret;[1]
But Lord! so she wax'd suddenly all red,
And thought anon how that she should be dead;
She couldé not one word aright out bring,
So suddenly for his sudden coming. 602

* * * * *

Can I naught say, for she bad him not rise,
If sorrow' it put out of her remembrance,
Or ellés that she took it in the wise
Of duéty as for his óbservance;
But well find I she did him this pleasance,
That she him kiss'd, although she sighéd sore,
And bade him sit adown withouten more. 609

* * * * *

Creseid', that was Troilus' lady right,
And clear stood in a ground of sikerness,[2]
All thought she, that her servant and her knight
Ne should of truth no unright[3] of her guess,
Yet nathéless, considered his distress,
And that love is in cause of such follý,
Thus to him spake she of his jealousy: 616

"Lo, hearté mine! as would the excellence
Of love, against the which that no man may,
Ne ought eke goodly maken résistance,
And eke because I felté well and say[4]
Your great truth and servícé every day,
And that your heart all mine was, soth to sain,
This drove me for to rue upon your pain; 623

"And your goodness have I founden' alway yet,
Of which my dearé heart, and all my knight!
I thank it you, as far as I have wit,
Al' can I not as much as it were right;
And I henceforth my conning[5] and my might
Have, and aye shall, how sore so that me smart,
Be to you true and whole with all my heart; 630

"And dredéless[6] that shall be found at preve:[7]
But, hearté mine! what all this is to sain
Shall well be told, so that ye naught you grieve,
Though I to you right on yourself complain,
For therewith mean I finally the pain

[1] Gret — greeted. [2] Sikerness — security. [3] Unright — wrong. [4] Say—saw. [5] Conning—skill. [6] Dredeless—doubtless. [7] Preve —proof.

That halt[1] your heart and mine in heaviness
Fully to slay, and every wrong redress. 637

"My good heart mine! n'ot[2] I for why ne how
That Jealousy, alas! that wick'd wivere,[3]
Thus causéless is cropen[4] into you,
The harm of which I would fain deliver:
Alas! that he all whole or of him sliver[5]
Should have his refuge in so digne a place!
Then Jove him soon out of your heart erase! 644

"But O thou Jove! O author of natúré!
Is this an honour to thy dignity
That folk unguilty suff'ren here injúry,
And who that guilty is all quit go'th he?
O were it lawful for to plain of thee,
That undeservéd suff'rest jealousy,
Of that I would upon thee plain and cry. 651

"Eke all my woe is this, that folk now usen
To say right thus; "Yea, jealousy is love,
And would a bushel of venom excusen,
For that a grain of love is on it shove',[6]
But that wot high Jove that sit'th above
If it be liker love, or hate, or grame,[7]
And after, that it ought to bear his name? 658

But certain is, some manner jealousy
Is excusable more than some iwis,[8]
As when cause is and some such fantasy,
With pity that so well expresséd is,
That it unnethés[9] doth or saith amiss,
But goodly drinketh up all his distress;
And that excuse I for the gentleness. 665

"And some so full of furies and despite
That it surmounteth his repression;
But, hearté mine! ye be not in that plight,
That thank I God, for which your passión
I will not call it, but illusión
Of ábundance of love and busy cure,[10]
That doth your hearté this disease endure; 672

"Of which I am right sorry but not wroth,
But for my devoir and your heartés rest.

[1] Halt—holds. [2] N'ot—ne wot, know not. [3] Wivere, (Sax.)—snake. [4] Cropen—crept. [5] Sliver—slice, portion. [6] On it shove—because one grain of love is thrust upon it. [7] Grame—anger. [8] Iwis—of a truth. [9] Unnethes—scarcely. [10] Cure—care.

Whereso you list, by ordal[1] or by oath,
By sort,[2] or in what wise so that you lest,
For love of God let prove it for the best,
And if that I be guilty do me die;
Alas! what might I more or do or say?" 679

And then with that a few bright tearés new
Out of her eyen fell, and thus she said;
"Now God, thou wot'st, in thought nor deed untrue
To Troilus was never yet Creseid';"
With that her head down in the bed she laid,
And with the sheet it wry,[3] and sighéd sore,
And held her peace; not a word spake she more.

* * * * *

This Troilus, when he her wordés heard, 687
Have ye no care[4] him listé not to sleep,
For it thought him no strokés of a yard[5]
To hear or see Creseid' his lady weep,
But well he felt about his hearté creep,
For every tear which that Creseid' astart,
The cramp of death to strain him by the heart. 693

And in his mind he 'gan the time accurse
That he came there, and that he was yborn,
For now is wicke[6] yturnéd into worse,
And all that labour he hath done beforne
He ween'd it lost, he thought it n'as but lorn:[7]
"O Pandarus! thought he, alas! thy wile
Serveth of naught, so welaway the while!" 700

And therewithal he hung adown his head,
And fell on knees, and sorrowfully sight:[8]
What might be say? he felt he n'as but dead,
For wroth was she that should his sorrows light;[9]
But nathéless when that he speaken might,[10]
Then said he thus; "God wot that of this game
When all is wist, then am I not to blame." 707

Therewith the sorrow in his heart so shet
That from his eyen fell there not a tear,

[1] Ordal—ordeal. *See note below.* [2] Sort—lot. [3] Wry—wrapped. [4] Have ye no care—be sure. [5] Yard—staff. [6] Wicke—evil. [7] N'as but lorn — was but lost. [8] Sight — sighed. [9] Light — lighten. [10] Might—was able.

V. 675. *by ordal.*] Ordalia, or ordeal, is a trial of chastity by going through the fire, as did Emma, the mother of the Confessor; or over hot coulters of iron, blindfold and barefooted, as did Gunegond, wife of Henry XV., Emperor of the Romans, according to Crautius in his *Chronicles of Germany.*

And every spirit his vigour in knet,[1]
So 'she' astonied and oppresséd were;
The feeling of his sorrow or his fear,
Or of aught ellés, fled were out of town;
Adown he fell all suddenly in swoon. 714

* * * * *

"Ye, that to me (quod she) full lever[2] were
Than all the good the sun about ygo'th;"
And therewithal she swore him in his ear,
"Iwis,[3] my dearé heart! I am not wroth,
Have here my truth, and many' another oath.
Now speak to me, for it am I Creseid':"
But all for naught; yet might he not abraid.[4] 721

Therewith his pulse and palmés of his honds
'She' 'gan to frote,[5] and wet his temples twain,
And to deliver him from bitter bonds
She oft him kiss'd; and, shortly for to sain,
Him to rewaken she did all her pain;
And at the last he 'gan his breath to draw,
And of his swoon soon after that adaw,[6] 728

And 'gan bet[7] mind and reason to him take;
But wonder sore he was abash'd iwis,[3]
And with a sigh when he 'gan bet awake
He said; "O mercy, God! what thing is this?"
"Why do ye with yourselven thus amiss?
(Quod then Creseid') Is this a mannés game?
What, Troilus! will ye do thus for shame?" 735

And therewithal her arm o'er him she laid,
And all forgave, and often time him kiss'd:
He thankéd her, and to her spake and said
As fell to purpose for his heartés rest;
And she to that answér'd him as her lest,[8]
And with her goodly wordés him disport
She 'gan, and oft his sorrows to comfórt. 742

* * * * *

Soon after this, (though it no need ywere)
When she such oathés as her list devise[9]
Had of him taken, her thoughté then no fear
Ne cause eke none to bid him thennés rise:
Yet lessé thing than oathés may suffice
In many' a case, for every wight I guess
That loveth well, meaneth but gentleness. 749

[1] In knet—knitted in. [2] Lever—dearer. [3] Iwis—indeed. [4] Abraid—awake. [5] Frote, (Fr.)—rub. [6] Adaw—awake: the dawing, or dawning, the awakening of the morning. [7] Bet—better. [8] As her lest—as she deemed rightly. [9] Devise—frame.

But in effect she would yweet[1] anon
Of what man, and eke where, and also why,
He jealous was, since there was causé none,
And eke the sign which that he took it by,
She bade him that to tell her busily,[2]
Or ellés certain she bare him on hond[3]
That this was done of malice, her to fond.[4] 756

Withouten moré, shortly for to sain,
He must obey unto his lady's hest,[5]
And for the less harm he must somewhat feign ;[6]
He said her, "When she was at such a feast
She might on him have lookéd at the least ;"
N'ot I not what (all dear enough a rish)[7]
As he that needés must a cause out fish. 763

And she answér'd ; "Sweetheart ! al' were it so,
What harm was that, since I no evil mean ?
For, by that God that wrought us bothé two,
In all manner thing is mine intent clean ;
Such arguments ne be not worth a bean :
Will ye the childish jealous counterfeit ?
Now were it worthy that ye were ybeat." 770

Then Troilus 'gan sorrowfully sike,
Lest she be wroth him thought his hearté died,
And said, "Alas ! upon my sorrow's sike[8]
Have mercy, O sweet hearté mine, Creseid' !
And if that in those wordés that I said
Be any wrong, I will no more trespace :
Do what you list ; I am all in your grace." 777

And she answer'd, "Of guilt misericorde,
That is to say, that I forgive all this,
And evermore on this night you record,
And be well 'ware ye do no more amiss."
"Nay, dear heart mine ! no more (quod he) iwis."[9]
"And now (quod she) that I have you do smart[10]
Forgive it to me, mine owné sweeté heart ! " 784

* * * * *

What might or may the sely[11] larké say
When that the spar'-hawk hath him in his foot ?
I can no more but of these ilké tway,

[1] Yweet—be made acquainted. [2] Busily—carefully. [3] Bare him on hond—accused him falsely. [4] Fond—prove, try. [5] Hest—command. [6] Feign—and, to cause the less mischief he must somewhat counterfeit. [7] Dear enough a rish—I know not what, all dear enough at the price of a rush. [8] Sike—sickness. [9] Iwis—of a truth. [10] Do you smart—caused you pain. [11] Sely—innocent.

(To whom this talé sugar be or sote)
Though I tarry a year, sometime I mote[1]
After mine author tellen their gladness,
As well as I have told their heaviness. 791

Creseidé, which that felt her thus itake,[2]
(As writen clerkés in their bookés old)
Right as an aspen leaf she 'gan to quake
When she him felt her in his armés fold;
But Troilus all whole of carés cold,
'Gan thanken then the blissful goddés seven.—
Thus sundry painés bringen folk to heaven. 798

* * * * *

And as the new abashéd nightingale,
That stinteth first, when she beginneth sing,
When that she heareth any herdés tale,[3]
Or in the hedges any wight stirring;
And after, siker[4] doth her voice out ring;—
Right so Creseid', when that her dread stent,
Opened her heart, and told him her intent. 805

And right as he that seeth his death ishapen,
And dien must, in aught that he may guess,
And suddenly rescúe doth him escapen,
And from his death is brought in sikerness,[5]
For all this world in such presént gladness
Was Troilus, and hath his lady sweet:
With no worse hap God let us never meet! 812

* * * * *

Then said he thus; "O Love! O Charity!
Thy mother eke, Citherea the sweet!
After thyself next heriéd[6] be she,
Venus I mean, the wellwilly[7] planet;
And next that, Hymenæus! I thee greet,
For never man was to you goddés hold[8]
As I, which ye have brought from carés cold." 819

* * * * *

And therewithal Creseid' anon he kiss'd,
Of which certáin she ne felt no disease,[9]
And thus said he; "Now would to God I wist,
Mine hearté sweet! how I you best might please.
What man (quod he) was ever thus at ease
As I, on which the fairest and the best
That ere I saw deigneth her heart to rest? 826

[1] Mote—must. [2] Itake—taken. [3] Herdes tale—the shepherd telling, or counting his sheep. [4] Siker—more boldly. [5] Sikerness—certainty. [6] Heried—worshipped. [7] Wellwilly—well-wishing, propitious. [8] Hold—beholden. [9] Disease—discomfort.

"Here may ye see that mercy passeth right;
Th' experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so sweet a wight;
But hearté mine! of your benignity
So thinketh, that though I unworthy be,
Yet must I need amenden in some wise
Right through the virtue of your high service. 833

"And for the love of God, my lady dear!
Sith he hath wrought me for I shall you serve,[1]
As thus I mean, that ye will be my fere[2]
To do me live, if that you list, or sterve;[3]
So teacheth me how that I may deserve
Your thank,[4] so that I through mine ignorance
Ne do nothíng that you be displeasance: 840

"For certés, fresh and womanliké wife!
This dare I say, that truth and diligence,
That shall ye finden in me all my life,
Ne I will not certáin break your defence;
And if I do, presént or in absence,
For love of God let slay me with the deed,
If that it like unto your womanhede." 847

"Iwis, (quod she) mine owné heartés lust![5]
My ground of ease, and all mine hearté dear!
Grant mercy! for on that is all my trust:
But let us fall away from this mattere,
For it sufficeth this that said is here;
And at one word, withouten repentance,
Welcome my knight, my peace, my suffisance!" 854

Of their delight or joys one of the least
Were impossíble to my wit to say,
But judgeth ye that have been at the feast
Of such gladness, if that him list to play;
I can no more but thus, these ilké tway
That night, betwixen drede and sikerness,[6]
Felten in love the greatest worthiness. 861

O blissful night! of them so long isought,
How blithe unto them bothé two thou were!
Why ne' had I such feast with my soul ibought,
Yea, or but the least joy which that was there?
Away thou foulé danger[7] and thou fear!
And let them in this heaven bliss ydwell,
That is so high that all ne can I tell. 868

[1] For I shall you serve—in order that I may serve you. [2] Fere—partner. [3] Sterve — die. [4] Thank — reward. [5] Lust — delight. [6] Drede and sikerness—doubt and certainty. [7] Danger—reserve.

But soth is, though I cannot tellen all,
As can mine author of his excellence,
Yet have I said, and God toforné[1] shall,
In every thing all wholly his sentence,
And if that I at Lovés reverence
Have any word in eched[2] for the best,
Do therewithal right as yourselven lest;[3] 875

For all my wordés here, and every part,
I speak them all under correctión
Of you that feeling have in lové's art,
And put it all in your discretión,
To increase or make diminutión
Of my languáge, and that I you beseech:
But now to purpose of my rather speech.[4] 882

These ilké two, that been in armés left,
So loth to them asunder gone it were,
That each from other weenden been bereft;[5]
Or ellés, lo! this was their mosté fear,
That all this thing but nicé[6] dreamés were,
For which full oft each of them said; "O sweet!
Clip I you thus, or else do I it mete?"[7] 889

And, Lord! so he 'gan goodly on her see,
That never his look ne blent[8] from her face,
And said, "O my dear hearté! may it be
That it be soth that ye be in this place?"
"Yea, hearté mine! God thank I of his grace,"
(Quod then Creseid') and therewithal him kiss'd,
That where her spirit was for joy she n'ist.[9] 896

This Troilus full oft her eyen two
'Gan for to kiss, and said; "O eyen clear!
It weren ye that wrought me suché woe,
Ye humble nettés of my lady dear,
Though there be mercy written in your cheer,
God wot the text full hard is for to find;
How coulden ye withouten bond me bind?" 903

Therewith he 'gan her fast in armés take,
And well a hundred timés 'gan he sike,
Not such sorrówful sighés as men make
For woe, or ellés when that folk be sick,
But easy sighés, such as be to like,[10]

[1] Toforne—before. [2] Eched—added. [3] Lest—please. [4] Rather speech—earlier, or former, discourse. [5] Weenden been bereft—each thought the other would be taken wholly away. [6] Nice—vain. [7] Mete—fancy, dream. [8] Blent—departed. [9] N'ist—ne wist, knew not. [10] Be to like—are cherished.

That shewéd his affectión within ;
Of such manner sighés could he not blin.[1] 910

Soon after this they spake of sundry things,
As fell to purpose of this áventure,
And playing enterchangeden their rings,
Of which I cannot tellen no scripture,[2]
But well I wot a brooch of gold and azúre,
In which a ruby set was, like a heart,
Creseid' him gave, and stuck it on his shirt. 917

Lord ! trowé ye that a covétous wretch
That blameth love, and halt of it despite,[3]
That of those pence that he can muckre' and catch
Was ever[4] yet give to him such delight,
As is in love in one point in some plight ?[5]
Nay, doubtéless, for all, so God me save,
So perfect joy ne may no niggard have. 924

They will say Yes, but Lord that so they lie !
Those busy wretches full of woe and dread
That callen love a woodness[6] or follý ;
But it shall fall them as I shall you read,[7]
They shall forego the white and eke the red,
And live in woe, there God give them mischance,
And every lover in his truth advance. 931

As would to God those wretches that despise
Service of love, had earés all so long
As had Midás, all full of covetise,
And thereto drunken had as hot and strong
As Cyrus did for his affectés[8] wrong,
To teachen them that they be in the vice,
And lovers not, although they hold them nice.[9] 938

These ilké two of whom that I you say,
When that their heartés well assuréd were,
Then gonnén they to speaken and to play,
And eke rehearsen how, and when, and where,
They knewen first, and every woe or fear

[1] Blin—cease. [2] No scripture—I can give no description. [3] Halt in despite—holds it in hatred. [4] Was ever—has, or did, ever. [5] In some plight—under certain circumstances or conditions. [6] Woodness—madness. [7] I shall you read—it shall befall them as I shall inform you. [8] Affectes—desires, affections. [9] Nice—foolish.

V. 936. *As Cyrus did.*] The younger Cyrus, in the letter he wrote to Lacedemon to solicit auxiliaries, boasted his philosophy, his royal blood, and his ability *to drink more wine than his brother without being intoxicated.* This is the "wrong affection" to which Chaucer alludes.

That passéd was; but all such heaviness,
Ithanked God, was turnéd to gladness. 945

And evermore when that they fell to speak
Of any thing of such a time agone,
With kissing all that talé should ybreak,
And fallen into a new joy anon,
And didden all their might, since they were one,
For to recoveren bliss and be at ease,
And 'peaséd[1] woe with joyés counterpaise. 952

Reason will not that I speaken of sleep,
For it accordeth not to my mattere;
God wot they took of it full little keep,[2]
But lest this night that was to them so dear
Ne should in vain escape in no mannere,
It was beset in joy and business
Of all that souneth into gentleness.[3] 959

But when the cock, common astrologer,
'Gan on his breast to beat and after crow;
And Lucifer, the dayés messenger,
'Gan for to rise, and out his beamés throw,
And eastward rose, to him that could it know,
Fortuna Major, then anon Creseid'
With hearté sore to Troilus thus said: 966

"Mine heartés life, my trust, all my pleasánce!
That I was born, alas! that me is woe,
That day of us must make disseverance,
For time it is to rise and hennés go,
Or ellés I am lost for evermo.
O Night! alas! why n'ilt thou o'er us hove[4]
As long as when Alcmena lay by Jove? 973

"O blacké Night! as folk in bookés read,
That shapen art by God this world to hide
At certain timés with thy darké weed,[5]
That under that men might in rest abide,
Well oughten beasts to plain and folk to chide,
That thereas day with labour would us brest,[6]
That thou us fliest and deignest us not rest. 980

"Thou doest, alas! so shortly thine office,
Thou rakel[7] Night, that God maker of kind,[8]
Thee for thine haste, and thine unkindé vice
So fast aye to our hemispheré bind,
That never more under the ground thou wind;

[1] 'Peased—appeased, stayed. [2] Took keep—took care. [3] Souneth into gentleness—is consonant with gentleness. [4] O'er us hove—why wilt thou not hover o'er us. [5] Weed—garment. [6] Brest—break, burst. [7] Rakel—hasty, rash. [8] Kind—nature.

For through thy rakel hying[1] out of Troy
Have I forgone thus hastily my joy." 987

This Troilus, that with those wordés felt,
As thought him then, for piteous distress
The bloody tearés from his hearté melt,
As he that yet nevér such heaviness
Assayed[2] had out of so great gladness,
'Gan therewithal Creseid' his lady dear
In armés strain, and said in this mannere : 994

"O cruel Day! accuser of the joy
That Night and Love hath stole and fast iwry,
Accursed be thy coming into Troy!
For every bow'r hath one of thy bright eyen :
Envious Day! what list thee so to spyen?
What hast thou lost? why seekest thou this place?
There God thy light so quenché for his grace! 1001

"Alas! what have these lovers thee agilt?[3]
Despiteous Day! thine be the pain of hell,
For many' a lover hast thou slain and wilt;
Thy poring in will no where let them dwell:
What! proffer'st thou thy light here for to sell?
Go, sell it them that smallé sealés grave;
We will thee not; us needeth no day have." 1008

And eke the sunné Titan 'gan he chide,
And said; "O fool! well may men thee despise,
That hast all night the Dawning by thy side,
And suffer'st her so soon up from thee rise,
For to disease[4] us lovers in this wise;
What? hold your bed there thou and thy Morrow;
I biddé God so give you bothé sorrow." 1015

Therewith full sore he sigh'd, and thus he said:
"My lady bright, and of my weal or woe
The well and root! O goodly mine, Creseid'!
And shall I rise, alas! and shall I go?
Now feel I that mine hearté must a-two;
And how should I my life an houré save
Since that with you is all the life I have? 1022

"What shall I do? for certés I n'ot[5] how,
Nor when, alas! I shall the timé see
That in this plight I may be eft[6] with you,
And of my life God wot how shall that be,
Since that desire right now so biteth me

[1] Rakel hying—hasty departure. [2] Assayed—proved. [3] Agilt—sinned against. [4] Disease—discomfort. [5] N'ot—know not. [6] Eft—again.

That I am dead anon but[1] I return:
How should I long, alas! from you sojóurn? 1029

"But nathéless, mine owné lady bright!
Yet were it so that I wist utterly
That I your humble servant and your knight
Were in your heart iset so firmély
As ye in mine, the which thing truély
Me lever were[2] than have these worldés twain,
Yet should I bet[3] enduren all my pain." 1036

To that Creseid' answeréd right anon,
And with a sigh she said; "O hearté dear!
The game iwis[4] so farforth now is gone,
That first shall Phœbus fallen from the sphere,
And evereach eagle be the dovés fere,[5]
And every rock out of his place astart,
Ere Troilus go out of Creseid's heart. 1043

"Ye be so deep within mine heart ygrave,
That then I would it turn out of my thought,
As wisely[6] very God my soulé save,
To dyen in the pain I couldé naught;
And for the love of God, that us hath wrought,
Let in your brain no other fantasy
So creepen, that it causé me to die. 1050

"And that ye me would have as fast in mind
As I have you, that would I you beseech,
And if I wist sothly[7] that to find,
God might not one point of my joyés eche.[8]
But, hearté mine! withouten moré speech,
Be to me true, or ellés were it ruth,
For I am thine, by God and by my truth. 1057

"Be glad forthy,[9] and live in sikerness,[10]
Thus said I ne'er ere this, ne shall to mo;
And if to you it were a great gladness
To turn again soon after that ye go,
As fain[11] would I as ye that it were so,
As wisely[6] God mine hearté bring to rest;"
And him in armés took, and ofté kist. 1064

Against his will, sith it must needés be,
This Troilus up rose, and fast him clad,
And in his armés took his lady free[12]

[1] But—unless. [2] Me lever were—I had rather. [3] Bet—better. [4] Iwis—certainly, in truth. [5] Fere—companion. [6] Wisely—surely. [7] Sothly—truly. [8] Eche—increase. [9] Forthy—therefore. [10] Sikerness—safety. [11] Fain—glad. [12] Free—bounteous.

A hundred times, and on his way him sped,
And with such wordés as his heart ybled,
He saidé "Fareth well, my dear heart sweet!
That God us granté sound and soon to meet." 1071

To which no word for sorrow she answér'd,
So soré 'gan his parting her distrain,
And Troilus unto his palace far'd,
As woe begone as she was, soth to sain,
So hard him wrung of sharp desire the pain;
For to be eft[1] there he was in pleasánce,
That it may ne er out of his rémembrance. 1078

Returnéd to his royal palace soon
He soft unto his bed 'gan for to shrink,
To sleepé long, as he was wont to done;
But all for naught; he may well lie and wink,
But sleep may there none in his hearté sink,
Thinking how she, for whom desire him brend,[2]
A thousand fold was worth more than he ween'd.[3]

And in his thought 'gan up and down to wind 1086
Her wordés all, and every countenance,
And firmély impressen in his mind
The leasté point that to him was pleasánce,
And verily of thilké rémembrance
Desire all new him brend,[2] and lust to breed[4]
'Gan more than erst, and yet took he no heed. 1092

Creseid' also right in the samé wise
Of Troilus 'gan in her hearté shet,
His worthiness, his lust,[5] his deedés wise,
His gentleness, and how she with him met,
Thanking Love that he so well her beset,[6]
Desiring oft to have her hearté dear
In such a place as she durst make him cheer.[7] 1099

Pandare a-morrow which that comen was
Unto his niecé 'gan her fair to greet,
And sayéd; "All this night so rainéd it alas!
That all my dread is that ye, niecé sweet!
Have little leisure had to sleep and mete:[8]
All night (quod he) hath rain so do me wake,
That some of us I trow their headdés ake." 1106

* * * * *

[1] To be eft, &c.—again where he was in happiness. [2] Brend—burned. [3] Ween'd—suspected. [4] Lust to breed, &c.—desire to increase began more than ever. [5] Lust—pleasure. [6] Beset—engaged, delighted. [7] Make him cheer—make him happy. [8] Mete—dream.

Now turné we again to Troilus,
That restéless full long a-bed ylay,
And privily sent after Pandarus,
To him to come in all the haste he may :
He came anon, not onés said he nay,
And Troilus full soberly he gret,[1]
And down upon the beddés side him set. 1113

This Troilus with all th' affectión
Of friendly love that hearté may devise
To Pandarus on knees fell adown,
And ere that he would off the place arise
He 'gan him thanken on his besté wise :
A hundred times he 'gan the timé bless
That he was born, to bring him from distress. 1120

He said ; "O friend of friends! the alderbest[2]
That ever was, thee sothé[3] for to tell,
Thou hast in heaven ibrought my soul at rest
From Phlegethon, the fiery flood of hell,
That though I might a thousand timés sell
Upon a day my life in thy servíce,
It ne might not a mote[4] in that suffice. 1127

"The sunné, which that all the world may see,
Saw never yet (my life that dare I lay)
So jolly, fair, and goodly, as is she
Whose I am all, and shall till that I die ;
And that I thus am hers, dare I well say,
That thankéd be the highé worthiness
Of Love, and eke thy kindé business.[5] 1134

"Thus hast thou me no little thing igive ;
For why ? to thee obligéd be for aye
My life ; and why ? for through thy help I live,
Or else dead had I been many a day :"
And with that word down in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus full soberly him heard
Till all was said, and then he him answer'd : 1141

"My dearé friend ! if I have done for thee
In any case, God wot it is me lefe,[6]
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God help me so ; but take now not agrief[7]
That I shall say ; beware of this mischief,
That where as now thou brought art to thy bliss
That thou thyself ne cause it not to miss : 1148

[1] Gret — greeted. [2] Alderbest — best of all. [3] Sothe — truth. [4] Mote—atom. [5] Business—diligence. [6] It is me lefe—it is gratifying to me. [7] Take not a grief—be not offended.

"For of Fortúnés sharp adversity
The worsté kind of infortune is this,
A man to have been in prosperity,
And it remember when it passed is:
Thou 'rt wise enough, forthy[1] do not amiss;
Be not too rakel[2] though thou sitté warm,
For if thou be, certáin it will thee harm. 1155

"Thou art at ease, and hold thee well therein,
For all so sure as red is every fire,
As great a craft is to keep well as win.
Bridle alway thy speech and thy desire,
For worldly joy holdeth but by a wire,
That proveth well, it brest[3] all day so oft,
Forthy[1] need is to worken with it soft." 1162

(Quod Troilus) "I hope, and God toforne,[4]
My dearé friend! that I shall so me bear
That in my guilt there shall nothíng be lorn,[5]
Ne I n'ill rakel[6] for to grieven her;
It needeth not this matter oft to tear,
For, wistest thou my hearté[7] well, Pandare,
God wot of this thou wouldest little care." 1169

Then 'gan he tell him of his gladé night,
And whereof first his heart ydrad and how,
And sayéd; "Friend, as I am a true knight,
And by that faith I owe to God and you,
I had it never half so hot as now,
And ever the more that desire me biteth
To love her best the more it me delighteth. 1176

"I n'ot myself not wisely[8] what it is,
But now I feelen a new quality,
Yea, all another than I did ere this."
Pandare answer'd and sayéd thus, "That he
That onés may in heaven bliss ybe,
He feeleth other wayés dare I lay,
Than thilké time he first heard of it say." 1183

This is a word for all, that Troilus
Was never full to speak of this mattere,
And for to praisen unto Pandarus
The bounty of his bright lady so dear,
And Pandarus to thank and maken cheer:

[1] Forthy—therefore. [2] Rakel—rash. [3] Brest—breaks. [4] Toforne—before God. [5] Lorn—lost. [6] Ne I n'ill rakel—nor will I be rash to grieve her. [7] For wistest thou my hearte, &c.—for if you well knew my heart, Pandare, God knows you would little care for this. [8] Wisely—I do not myself know certainly what it is.

This tale was aye spun newé to begin
Till that the night departed them atwin. 1190

Soon after this, for that Fortúne it would,
Icomen was the blissful timé sweet
That Troilus was warnéd that he should
There he was erst[1] Creseid' his lady meet,
For which he felt his heart in joyé fleet,
And faithfully 'gan all the goddés hery;
And let see now if that he can be merry. 1197

And holden was the form and all the guise
Of her coming, and eke of his also,
As it was erst,[1] which needeth naught devise;

* * * * *

Naught needeth it to you, sith they been met,
To ask at me if that they blithe ywere,
For if it erst was well, then was it bet
A thousand fold. this needeth not enquere;
Agone was every sorrow' and every fear,
And both iwis[2] they had, and so they ween'd,[3]
As muchel joy as heart may comprehend. 1207

This is no little thing of for to say,
This passeth every wit for to devise,[4]
For each of them 'gan other's lust[5] obey.
Felicity, which that these clerkés wise
Commenden so, ne may not here suffice;
This joy ne may not written be with ink;
This passeth all that any heart may think. 1214

But cruel day, so welaway the stound![6]
'Gan for t' approach, as they by signés knew,
For which them thought they feelen deathés wound:
So woe was them that changen 'gan their hue,
And day they gonnen to despise all new,[7]
Calling it traitor, envious, and worse,
And bitterly the dayés light they curse. 1221

(Quod Troilus) "Alas! now am I ware
That Pyrois, and those swifté steedés three
Which that ydrawen forth the Sunnés car
Have gone some by-path in despite of me,
And maketh it so sooné day to be,
And for the Sun him hasteth thus to rise
Ne shall I never do him sacrifice." 1228

[1] Erst—before. [2] Iwis—indeed. [3] Ween'd—thought. [4] Devise—describe. [5] Lust—pleasure. [6] Wellaway the stound—alas the time. [7] All new—afresh.

But needés day departen them must soon;
And when their speeché done was and their cheer
They twin[1] anon, as they were wont to done,
And setten time of meeting eft ifere,[2]
And many' a night they wrought in this mannere:
And thus Fortúne a time yled in joy
Creseid' and eke this kingés son of Troy. 1235

In suffisance,[3] in bliss, and in singings,
This Troilus 'gan all his life to lead;
He spendeth, jousteth, and maketh feastings;
He giveth freely oft, and changeth weed;[4]
He held about him alway out of drede[5]
A world of folk, as come him well of kind,[6]
The freshest and the best that he could find. 1242

That such a voice was of him and a steven[7]
Throughout the world of honour and largess[8]
That it up rung unto the gate of heaven;
And as in love he was in such gladness
That in his heart he deeméd as I guess
That there n'is lover[9] in this world at ease
So well as he, and thus 'gan love him please. 1249

The goodlihead or beauty which that kind[10]
In any other lady had iset,
Can not the mountance of a gnat[11] unbind
About his heart of all Creseidés net;
He was so narrow imaskéd and iknet
That is undone in any manner side,
That n'ill not be for aught that may betide. 1256

And by the hand full often he would take
This Pandarus, and into garden lead,
And such a feast and such a process make
Him of Creseid', and of her womanhede,[12]
And of her beauty, that withouten drede[13]
It was a heaven his wordés for to hear,
And then he wouldé sing in this mannere: 1263

"Love, that of earth and sea hath governance,
Love, that his hestés[14] hath in heaven high,
Love, that with a right wholesome álliance

[1] Twin—separate. [2] Eft ifere—again together. [3] Suffisance—satisfaction. [4] Weed — dress. [5] Out of drede — without doubt. [6] As come him well of kind—that came to him well bred by nature. [7] Steven—report, renown. [8] Largess—bounty. [9] N'is lover—is no lover. [10] Kind—nature. [11] Mountance of a gnat—the amount in value of a gnat. [12] Womanhede—womanly qualities. [13] Drede—doubt. [14] Hestes—commands.

Halt[1] people joinéd as him list them gie,
Love, that yknitteth law and company,
And couples doth in virtue for to dwell,
Bind this accord that I have told and tell. 1270

"That that the world with faith, which that is stable,
Diverseth so his stoundés[2] according,
That elements that be discordable
Holden a bond perpetually during,
That Phœbus must his rosy day forth bring,
And that the moon hath lordship o'er the nights,
All this doth Love; aye heried[3] be his mights! 1277

"That that the sea, that greedy is to flowen,
Constraineth to a certain endé so
His floodés, that so fiercely they ne growen
To drenchen[4] earth and all for evermo,
And if that Love aught let his bridle go,
All that now loveth asunder should leap,
And lost were all that Love halt now to heap.[5] 1284

"So would to God, that author is of kind,[6]
That with his bond Love of his virtue list
To searchen heartés all, and fast to bind,
That from his bond no wight the way out wist,[7]
And heartés cold them would I that he twist
To make them love, and that list him aye rue[8]
On heartes sore, and keep them that be true." 1291

In allé needés for the townés war
He was, and aye the first in armés dight,[9]
And certainly, but if that bookés err,
Save Hector most idread of any wight;
And this encrease of hardiness and might
Come him of love, his lady's thank[10] to win,
That alteréd his spirit so within. 1298

In time of truce on hawking would he ride,
Or ellés hunt the boar, bear, or lióun,
The smallé beastés let he go beside;
And when that he came riding into town,
Full oft his lady from her window down,
As fresh as falcon comen out of mew,
Full ready was him goodly to salue. 1305

[1] Halt people—holds people joined as he chooses to lead them. [2] Stoundes—times. [3] Heried—worshipped be his power. [4] Drenchen—drown. [5] Halt to heap—holds together. [6] Kind—nature. [7] Wist—knoweth. [8] List him aye rue—that it would please him ever to have pity. [9] Dight—clad. [10] Thank—reward.

And most of love and virtue was his speech,
And in despite had he all wretchedness ;[1]
And doubtless no need was him to beseech
To honouren them that had worthiness,
And easen them that weren in distress;
And glad was he if any wight well far'd
That lover was, when he it wist[2] or heard. 1312

For, soth to say, he lost held every wight
But if he were in Lovés high servíce,
I meané folk that ought it be of right;
And o'er all this so well could he devise[3]
Of sentiment, and in so uncouth[4] wise
All his array, that every lover thought
That all was well what so he said or wrought. 1319

And though that he be come of blood royal
Him list of pride at no wight for to chace;
Benign he was to each in general,
For which he got him thank in every place :
Thus wouldé love, (iheried[5] be his grace!)
That pride and ire, envy and avarice,
He 'gan to fly, and every other vice. 1326

Thou lady bright, the daughter of Dione!
Thy blind and winged son eke, Dan Cupide!
Ye Sistren Nine eke ! that by Helicon
In hill Parnasso listen[6] for t' abide,
That ye thus far have deignéd me to guide,
I can no more, but since that ye will wend,[7]
Ye heried be for aye withouten end! 1333

Through you have I said fully in my song
Th' effect and joy of Troilus' service,
Al' be that there was some disease[8] among,
As mine authór to listeth to devise :[9]
My Thirdé Book now end I in this wise,
And Troilus in lust and in quiete
Is with Creseidé, his own lady sweet. 1340

[1] Wretchedness—he held in hatred all baseness. [2] Wist—knew. [3] Devise—speak, discourse. [4] Uncouth wise—so rare, or uncommon, a character. [5] Iheried—worshipped. [6] Listen—choose. [7] Wend—depart. [8] Disease—discomfort. [9] Listeth to devise—pleaseth to describe.

BOOK IV.

BUT all too little, welaway[1] the while!
Lasteth such joy, ithankéd be Fortúne,
That seemeth truest when she will beguile,
And can to foolés so her song entune
That she them hent and blent,[2] traitor commúne,
And when a wight is from her wheel ithrow[3]
Then laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.[4] 7

From Troilus she 'gan her brighté face
Away to writhe, and took of him no heed,
And cast him clean out of his lady's grace,
And on her wheel she set up Diomed,
For which mine heart right now 'ginneth to bleed;
And now my pen, alas! with which I write,
Quaketh for dread of that I must indite. 14

For how Creseidé Troilus forsook,
Or at the least how that she was unkind,
Must hennésforth be matter of my Book,
As writen folk through which it is in mind:
Alas! that they should ever causé find
To speak her harm! and if they on her lie,
Iwis themselves should have the villainy. 21

O ye Erinnyes! Nightés daughters three,
That endéless complain evér in pain,
Megæra', Allecto, and Tysiphone,
Thou cruel Mars eke! father of Quirine,
This ilké Fourth Book help me for to fine,[5]
So that the loss of love and life ifere[6]
Of Troilus be fully shewéd here. 28

Ligging[7] in host, as I have said ere this,
The Greekés strong abouten Troyé town,
Befell that when that Phœbus shining is

[1] Welaway — alas. [2] Hent and blent — caught and blinded. [3] Ithrow — thrown. [4] Mowe — grimace. [5] Fine — conclude, finish. [6] Ifere—together. [7] Ligging—lying.

V. 25. *Quirine.*] Quirinus was the surname of Mars. It was also conferred upon Romulus (who claimed paternity with the god) upon his deification by the people.

Upon the breast of Hercules' Liôun,
That Hector with many a bold baroun
Cast on a day with Greekés for to fight,
As he was wont, to grieve them what he might. 35

N'ot I how long or short it was between
This purpose and that day they fighten meant;
But on a day well arméd bright and sheen
Hector and many' a worthy knight out went
With spear in hand, and with big bowés bent,
And in the beard, withouten longer let,[1]
Their foemen in the field anon them met. 42

The longé day with spearés sharp iground,
With arrows, dartés, swords, and macés fell,
They fight, and bringen horse and man to ground,
And with their axes out the brainés quell;[2]
But in the last show'r, sothé for to tell,
The folk of Troy themselven so misled,[3]
That with the worse at night homeward they fled. 49

At whiché day was taken Antenor,
Polydamas, and also Menestes,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Polystenor,
Polites, or the Trojan, Dan Ruphes,
And other lessé folk, as Phebuses,
So that for harm that day the folk of Troy
Dreaden to lose a great part of their joy. 56

Of Priamus was give, at Greeks request,
A time of truce, and then they gonnen treat
Their prisoners to changen most and least,
And for the surplus given summés great;
This thing anon was couth[4] in every street,
Both in th' assiege, in town, and every where,
And with the first it came to Calchas' ear. 63

When Calchas knew this treatise should yhold,
In consistory' among the Greekés soon
He 'gan in thring[5] forth with the lordés old,
And set him there as he was wont to done,
And with a changéd face them bade a boon,[6]
For love of God, to do that reverence
To stinten noise, and give him audience. 70

Then said he thus; "Lo! Lordés mine, I was
Trojan, as it is knowen out of drede,[7]
And if that you remember' I am Calchas,

[1] Longer let, &c.—without longer delay they bearded their foemen in the field. [2] Quell—dash, crush. [3] So misled—behaved themselves so amiss. [4] Couth—common. [5] Thring—thrust. Bade a boon—asked a favour. [7] Drede—doubt.

That alderfirst[1] gave comfort to your need,
And toldé well how that you shoulden speed,
For dredéless through you shall in a stound[2]
Be Troy ibrent, and beaten down to ground. 77

"And in what form or in what manner wise
This town to shend,[3] and all your lust achieve,
Ye have ere this well heard me you devise;[4]
This knowen ye, my Lordés, as I 'lieve;[5]
And, for the Greekés weren me so leve,[6]
I came myself in my propér persón
To teach in this how you was best to done. 84

"Having unto my treasure ne my rent
Right no regard in réspect of your ease,
Thus all my good I left and to you went,
Weening[7] in this you, Lordés, for to please;
But all that loss ne doth me no disease;[8]
I vouchsafe do, as wisely[9] have I joy,
For you to lose all that I have in Troy, 91

"Save of a daughter that I left, alas!
Sleeping at home when out of Troy I start:
O stern, O cruel father that I was!
How might I have in that so hard a heart?
Alas that I n' had brought her in my skirt!
For sorrow' of which I will not live to-morrow,
But if[10] ye, Lordés, rue upon my sorrow. 98

"For, because that I saw no time ere now
Her to deliver' I holden have my peace,
But now or never, if that it like you,
I may her have right sooné now doubtless:
O help and grace amongés all this press![11]
Rue on this oldé caitiff in distress,
Sith I through you have all this heaviness. 105

"Ye have now caught and fetter'd in prisón
Trojans enow, and if your willés be
My child with one may have redemptión;
Now for the love of God and of bounty
One of so fele,[12] alas! so give him me:
What need were it this prayér for to wern,[13]
Sith ye shall have both folk and town as yern?[14] 112

[1] Alderfirst—first of all. [2] Stound—short time. [3] Shend—destroy. [4] Devise—describe. [5] 'Lieve—believe. [6] So leve—and because the Greeks were so dear to me. [7] Weening—thinking. [8] Disease—discomfort. [9] Wisely—truly, certainly. [10] But if—unless. [11] Press—crowd, company. [12] Fele—many. [13] Wern—reject. [14] Yern—immediately.

"On peril of my life I shall not lie,
Apollo hath me told full faithfully;
I have eke founden by astronomy,
By sort,[1] and eke by augury, truély,
And dare well say the time is fasté by
That fire and flame on all the town shall spread,
And thus shall Troy yturn to ashen dead. 119

"For certain Phœbus and Neptunus both,
That makeden the wallés of the town,
Be with the folk of Troy alway so wroth
That they will bring it to confusión;
Right in despite[2] of King Laomedon,
Because he n' oldé payen them their hire,
The town of Troyé shall be set on fire." 126

Telling his tale alway this oldé grey,
Humble in speech and in his looking eke,
The salté tearés from his eyen tway
Full fast yrunnen down by either cheek;
So long he 'gan of succour them beseek,
That for to heal him of his sorrows sore
They gave him Antenor withouten more. 133

But who was glad enough but Calchas tho?[3]
And of this thing full soon his needés laid
On them that shoulden for the treatise go,
And them for Antenor full ofté pray'd
To bringen home King Thoas and Creseid';
And when Priám his safé conduct sent,
Th' embassadors to Troyé straight they went. 140

The cause i-told of their coming, the old
Priám the King full soon in general
'Gan hereupon his parliament to hold,
Of which th' effect rehearsen you I shall:
Th' embassadors been answer'd for final
Th' exchange of prisoners and all this need
Them liketh well, and forth in they proceed. 147

This Troilus was present in the place
When askéd was for Antenor Creseid',
For which full soon to changen 'gan his face,
As he that with those wordés well nigh died;
But nathéless he no word to it said,
Lest men should his affectión espy;
With mannés heart he 'gan his sorrows dry. 154

And full of anguish and of grisly drede
Abode what other lords would to it say,
And if that they would grant, as God forbide!

[1] Sort—lot, destiny. [2] Despite—hatred. [3] Tho—then.

Th' exchange of her; then thought he thingés tway,
First how to save her honour, and what way
He mighté best th' exchange of her withstand;
Full fast he cast how allé this might stand. 161

Love him made allé prest[1] to do her bide,
And rather dien than that she should go,
But Reason said him on that other side,
Withouten assent of her do not so,
Lest for thy worké she would be thy foe,
And say, that through thy meddling is iblow
Your bothé love there it was erst not know.[2] 168

For which he 'gan deliberen for the best,
And though the lordés woulden that she went,
He wouldé suffer them grant what them lest,[3]
And tell his lady first what that they meant;
And when that she had said him her intent,
Thereafter would he worken all so blive[4]
Though all the world against it would ystrive. 175

Hector with that full well the Greekés heard
For Antenor how they would have Creseid',
'Gan it withstand, and soberly answer'd;
"Sirs, she ne is no prisoner (he said;)
I n'ot on you who that this chargé laid,[5]
But on my part ye may eftsones them tell
We usen here no women for to sell." 182

The noise of people upstart then at once
As breme[6] as blaze of straw iset on fire,
For infortúne it wouldé for the nones[7]
They shoulden their confusión desire.
"Hector, (quod they) what ghost may you inspire
This woman thus to shield, and do us lose
Dan Antenor? a wrong way now ye choose; 189

"That is so wise, and eke so bold barón,
And we have need of folk, as men may see;
He is one of the greatest of this town:
O Hector! let such thy fantasiés be;
O King Priám! (quod they) thus seggé[8] we,
That all our voice is to forego Creseid'."
And to deliver Antenor they pray'd. 196

* * * * *

[1] Prest, Fr. *prêt*—ready, eager. [2] Erst not know—through your meddling, both your love was blown whither it was never known before. [3] Lest—pleased. [4] Blive—briskly. [5] Charge laid—I know not who laid this commission upon you. [6] Breme—furious. [7] For the nones—for the occasion. [8] Segge—say.

For which, delibered[1] was by parliament,
For Antenor to yielden out Creseid',
And it pronounced by the President,
Although that Hector nay full ofté pray'd;
And finally, what wight that it withsaid,[2]
It was for naught; it must ybeen and should,
For substance of the parliament it would.[3] 203

Departed out o' th' parliament eachone,
This Troilus, withouten wordés mo,
Unto his chamber sped him fast alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The which he bade out fasté for to go,
Because that he would sleepen, as he said,
And hastily upon his bed him laid, 210

And as in winter leavés be bereft
Each after other till the trees be bare,
So that there n' is but bark and branch ileft,
Lithe[4] Troilus bireft of each welfare,
Ibounden in the blacké bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to braid,[5]
So sore him sate the changing of Creseid'. 217

He rist him up and every door he shet
And window eke, and then this woful man
Upon his beddés side adown him set,
Full like a dead imáge, both pale and wan,
And in his breast the heapéd woe began
Out burst, and he to worken in this wise,
In his woodness, as I shall you devise.[6] 224

Right as the wildé bull beginneth spring
Now here now there, idarted to the heart,
And of his death roareth in complaining,
Right so 'gan he about the chamber start,
Smiting his breast aye with his fistés smart;
His head to th' wall, his body to the ground,
Full oft he swapt,[7] him selven to confound. 231

His eyen two for pity of his heart
Our streameden as swift as wellés tway;
The highé sobbés of his sorrows smart
His speech him reft; unnethés might he say[8]
"O Death alas! why n'ilt thou do me dey?[9]

[1] Delibered — deliberated. [2] It withsaid — whoever gainsaid it, it all went for naught. [3] Substance of the parliament—the majority of the parliament resolved upon it. [4] Lithe- humble, meek. [5] Out of his wit to braid—madly disposed to start out of his senses. [6] Devise—describe. [7] Swapt—fell down. [8] Unnethes, &c.—scarcely was he able to say. [9] Dey—die.

Accursed be that day which that Natúre
Shope me to be a livés creáture!" 238

* * * * *

"O very Lord! O Love, O God! alas!
That knowest best mine heart and all my thought,
What shall my sorrówful life done in this case
If I forego that I so dere have bought?
Since ye Creseide and me have fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertés seled,
How may ye suffer' alas! it be repeled? 245

"What I may done I shall, while I may dure
On live, in torment and in cruel paine;
This infortune' and this disáventure
Alone as I was born I will complaine,
Ne never will I seen it shine or raine,
But end I will, as Edippe in darkness
My woful life, and dyin in distress. 252

"O weary ghost! that errest to and fro,
Why n'ilt thou flyen out of the wofullest
Body that ever might on ground ygo?
O soulé! lurking in this woful nest,
Flee forth anon, and do mine heart to breste,[1]
And follow Creseidé thy lady dere;
Thy right place is no longer to been here. 259

"O woful eyen two! since your disporte
Was all to seen Cresefd's eyen bright,
What shall ye done, but for my discomforte
Stondin for naught and weepin out your sight,
Since she is queint that wont was you to light?[2]
In vain from this forth have I eyen twey
Iforméd, since your virtue is away. 266

"O my Creseid'! O lady sovérain!
Of this sorrowful soulé that thus crieth,
Who shall now given comfort to thy pain?
Alas! no wight; but when mine heart ydieth,
My spirit, which that so unto you hieth,
Receive in gré,[3] for that shall aye you serve;
Forthy, no force is[4] though the body sterve.[5] 273

"O ye lovers! that high upon the wheel
Be set of Fortune, in good áventure,
God lene[6] that ye aye finden love of steel,

[1] To brest—and burst, break my heart. [2] To light—since she that was your light is extinct. [3] Receive in gre—accept amenably, or with good will. [4] Forthy, no force is—no matter therefore. [5] Sterve—die, perish. [6] God lene—God grant.

And longé may your life in joy endure;
But when ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your fellow resteth there,
For I lovéd eke, though I unworthy were. 280

"O old, unwholesome, and mislivéd[1] man—
Calchas I mean! alas! what ailéd thee
To be a Greek since thou art born Troján?
O Calchas! which that wilt my bané be,
In cursed timé wast thou born for me:—
As wouldé blissful Jové for his joy
That I thee had where that I would in Troy!" 287

A thousand sighés hotter than the glede[2]
Out of his breast each after other went,
Meddled[3] with plaintés new, his woe to feed,
For which his woful tearés never stent;[4]
And, shortly, so his sorrows him to rent,
He wax'd so mate[5] that ne joy nor penance
He feeleth none, but lieth in a trance. 294

Pandarus, which that in the parliament
Had heard what every lord and burgess said,
And how full granted was by one assent
For Antenor to yielden out Creseid',
'Gan well nigh wood out of his wit to braid,[6]
So that for woe he ne wist what he meant,
But in a rage to Troilus he went. 301

A certain knight that for the timé kept
The chamber door undid it him anon,
And Pandarus, that full tenderly wept,
Into the darké chamber, still as stone,
Towárd the bed 'gan softly for to gone,
So cónfuse that he ne wisté what to say;
For very woe his wit was nigh away. 308

And with his cheer and looking all to torn
For woe of this, and with his armés folden,
He stood this woful Troilus beforne,
And on his piteous face he 'gan beholden;
But Lord! so often 'gan his heart to colden,
Seeing his friend in woe, whose heaviness
His hearté slewe, as thought him, for distress. 315

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felt
His friend Pandare icomen him to see,
'Gan as the snow against the sun to melt,

[1] Mislived—bad-lived, living to an ill purpose. [2] Glede—burning coal. [3] Meddled—mingled. [4] Stent—ceased. [5] Mate—bewildered. [6] To braid—began nearly to start madly out of his senses.

For which this woful Pandare of pity
'Gan for to weep as tenderly as he;
And speechéless thus been these ilké tway,
That neither might for sorrow one word say. 322

But at the last this woful Troilus,
Nigh dead for smart, 'gan bursten out to roar,
And with a sorrowful noise he said thus
Among his sobbés and his sighés sore;
"Lo! Pandare, I am dead, withouten more;
Hast thou not heard at parliament, he said,
For Antenor how lost is my Creseid'?" 329

* * * * *

[Pandarus, like a true worldling, thinks to soothe his friend by reminding him that Troy contains many fairer dames than Creseida, and that "though she be lost, he shall recover another." But mark, with how high and worthy a tone Troilus rebukes him. Owning so calculating a heart, no wonder Pandarus should complain of his own ill success in love.]

These wordés said he for the nonés all[1]
To help his friend, lest he for sorrow dey'd,
For doubtéless to do his woe to fall
He ne raught not what unthrift that he said;[2]
But Troilus, that nigh for sorrow dey'd,
Took little heed of all that e'er he meant;
One ear it heard, at th' other out it went. 336

But at the last he answer'd, and said; "Friend,
This leechcraft, or yhealéd thus to be,
Were well fitting if that I were a fiend,
To trashen[3] her that true is unto me;
I pray God let this counsel never the,[4]
But do me rather starve[5] anon right here
Ere I thus do as thou me wouldést lere.[6] 343

"She that I serve iwis,[7] what so thou say,
To whom my heart inhabit is by right,
Shall have me wholly hers till that I dey;[8]
For, Pandarus, since I have truth her hight[9]
I will not be untrue for any wight,
But as her man I will aye live and sterve,[10]
And never will no other creature serve. 350

"And where thou say'st thou shalt as fair yfind
As she,—let be; make no comparison
To a creature iformed here by kind.[11]

[1] Nones all—for the occasion. [2] Unthrift that he said—he cared not what thoughtless thing he said. [3] Trashen—betray. [4] The—thrive. [5] Starve—die. [6] Lere—advise. [7] Iwis—truly. [8] Dey—die. [9] Hight—pledged, promised. [10] Sterve—die. [11] Kind—nature.

O leavé Pandarus! thy conclusión;
I will not be of thine opinión
Touching all this, for which I thee beseech;
So hold thy peace; thou slay'st me with thy speech.

"Thou biddest me that I should love another 358
All freshly new, and let Creseidé go:
It li'th not in my power, levé[1] brother,
And though I might, yet would I not do so:
But canst thou playen racket to and fro,
Nettle' in Dock out, now this now that, Pandare?
Now foulé fall her for thy woe that care! 364

"Thou farest eke by me, thou Pandarus,
As he that when a wight is woe begone,
He com'th to him apace and saith right thus,
'Think not on smart and thou shalt feelé none.'
Thou may'st me first transmewen into stone,
And reve[2] me of my passionés all,
Ere thou so lightly do my woe to fall.[3] 371

"The death may well out of my breast depart
The life, so long may last this sorrow mine,
But from my soulé shall Creseidés dart
Out nevermore, but down with Proserpine,
When I am dead, I will go won in pine,[4]
And there I will eternally complain
My woe, and how that twinnéd[5] be we twain." 378

* * * * *

This Troilus in tearés 'gan distil,
As liquor out of a limbeck full fast,
And Pandarus 'gan hold his tongué still,
And to the ground his eyen down he cast,
But nathéless thus thought he at the last;
What "pardé rather than my fellow dey,
Yet shall I somewhat more unto him say." 385

* * * * *

[He next advises him boldly to carry her off.]

To this answer'd him Troilus full soft,
And said; "Iwis,[6] my levé brother dear!
All this have I myself yet thought full oft,

[1] Leve—dear. [2] Reve—bereave. [3] Do my woe to fall—cause m woe to cease. [4] Won in pine—live in sorrow. [5] Twinned—severed. [6] Iwis—of a truth.

V. 363. *Nettle in Dock.*] This appears to be a proverbia expression implying inconstancy; but the origin of the phrase is unknown to all the commentators on our poet.

And more thingés than thou devisest here,
But why this thing is left thou shalt well hear,
And when thou hast me given audience
Thereafter may'st thou tell all thy sentence. 392

"First, since thou wot'st this town hath all this war
For ravishing of women so by might,
It should not be ysuffer'd me to err,
As it stant now, ne do so great unright;
I should have also blame of every wight
My father's grant if that I so withstood,
Since she is changéd for the townés good. 399

"I have eke thought, so it were her assent,
To ask her of my father of his grace;
Then think I this were her accusément,
Since well I wot I may her not purcháse;
For since my father in so high a place
As parliament hath her exchange ensealéd,
He n'ill[1] for me his letter be repealéd. 406

"Yet dread I most her hearté to perturb
With violence, if I do such a game;
For if I would it openly disturb,
It must be a disslander' unto her name;
And me were lever[2] die than her defame;
As n'oldé God,[3] but if that I should have
Her honour lever than my life to save. 413

"Thus am I lost, for aught that I can see,
For certain is, that sith I am her knight,
I must her honour lever have than me
In every case, as lover ought of right:
Thus am I with desire and reason twight,[4]
Desire for to disturben her me redeth,[5]
And reason n'ill not;—so mine hearté dredeth." 420

* * * * *

The swifté Famé, which that falsé thingés,
Equal reporteth like the thingés true,
Was throughout Troy ifled with prest wingés
From man to man, and made his tale all new,
How Calchas' daughter with her brighté hue,
At parliament, withouten wordés more,
Igrantéd was in change of Antenor. 427

[1] N'ill—will not. [2] Lever—rather. [3] As n'olde God—as God forbid but that I should hold her honour dearer than the saving of my own life. [4] Twight—plucked hither and thither. [5] Her me redeth—desire sways, or counsels, me to disturb her, and reason forbids; thus my heart doubteth.

The whiché tale anon right as Creseid'
Had heard, she, which that of her father raught [1]
(As in this case) right naught, nor when he died,
Full busily to Jupiter besought
Give him mischancé that this treaty brought :
But, shortly, lest these talés sothé were,
She durst at no wight asken it for fear. 434

As she that had her heart and all her mind
On Troilus iset so wonder fast,
That all this world ne might her love unbind,
Ne Troilus out of her hearté cast,
She would be his while that her life may last;
And she thus brenneth both in love and drede [2]
So that she ne wist what was best to rede.[3] 441

But as men see in town and all about,
That women use their friendés to visit;
So to Creseid' of women came a rout
For piteous[4] joy, and weenden her delight,[5]
And with their talés, (dear enough a mite)
These women, which that in the city dwell,
They set them down, and said as I shall tell. 448

(Quod first that one) "I am glad truély
Because of you, that shall your father see."
Another said; "Iwis[6] so am not I,
For all too little hath she with us be."
(Quod then the third) "I hope iwis that she
Shall bringen us the peace on every side,
That when she go'th Almighty God her guide!" 455

Those wordés and those womanishé thingés
She heard them right as though she thennés were,
For God it wot, her heart on other thing is;
Although the body sat among them there,
Her ádvertence[7] is alway ellés where;
For Troilus full fast her soulé sought;
Withouten word, on him alway she thought. 462

These women that thus weenden[8] her to please
Abouten naught gone all their talés spend;[9]
Such vanity ne can do her no ease,
As she that all this meané whilé brend[10]
Of other passión than they yween'd,

[1] Raught—cared. [2] Drede—fear. [3] Rede—advise. [4] Piteous—merciful, compassionate. [5] Her delight—and thought to delight her. [6] Iwis — indeed. [7] Advertence — attention. [8] Weenden — thought. [9] Tales spend—wasted all their tales about nothing. [10] Meane while brend—as she who in the mean while was burning with another passion than they imagined.

So that she felt almost her hearté die
For woe, and weary of that company. 469

For whiché might she no longer restrain
Her tearés, they 'ganen so up to well,[1]
That gaven signés of her bitter pain
In which her spirit was and must ydwell,
Rememb'ring her, from heaven unto which hell
She fallen was, since she forgone the sight
Of Troilus, and sorrowfully she sight.[2] 476

And thilké foolés sitting her about
Weenden[3] that she had wept and sighéd sore
Becausé that she should out of the rout[4]
Departen, and never play with them more;
And they that hadden knowen her of yore
See her so weep, and thought it was kindness,
And each of them wept eke for her distress. 483

And busily they gonnen her comfórt
On thing, God wot on which she little thought,
And with their talés weenden her disport,
And to be glad they often her besought;
But such an ease therewith they in her wrought,
Right as a man is easéd for to feel
For ach of head, to claw him on his heel. 490

But after all this nicé[5] vanity
They took their leave, and home they wenten all;
Creseidé, full of sorrowful pity,
Into her chamber' up went out of the hall,
And on her bed she 'gan for dead to fall,
In purpose never thennés for to rise,
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.[6] 497

Her owndid hair, that sunnish was of hue,
She rent, and eke her fingers long and smale
She rung full oft, and bade God on her rue,
And with the death to do bote on her bale;[7]
Her hué, whilom bright, that then was pale,
Bare witness of her woe and her constraint,
And thus she spake, sobbing in her complaint: 504

"Alas! (quod she) out of this región
I, woful wretch and infortunéd wight,
And born in cursed constellatión,
Must go, and thus departen from my knight!
Woe worth, alas! that ilké dayés light

[1] Up to well—to spring up. [2] Sight—sighed. [3] Weenden—thought. [4] Rout—company. [5] Nice—silly. [6] Devise—describe. [7] Bote on her bale—put an end to her sorrow.

On which I saw him first with eyen twain
That causeth me, and I him, all this pain!" 511

Therewith the tearés from her eyen two
Down fell as show'rés full in April swith,[1]
Her whité breast she beat, and for the woe,
After the death she cried a thousand sith.[2]
Since he that wont her woe was for to lith[3]
She must forego, for which disáventure
She held herselfen a forlost creature. 518

She said; "How shall he do and I also!
How should I live if that I from him twin![4]
O dearé heart, eke that I lové so,
Who shall that sorrow slay that ye be in?
O Calchas, father! thine be all this sin!
O mother mine, that clepéd were Argive,
Woe worth that day that thou me bare on live! 525

"To what fine[5] should I live and sorrowen thus?
How should a fish withouten water dure?
What is Creseidé worth from Troilus?
How should a plant or other creáture
Liven without his kindly[6] nouriture?
For which full oft a byword here I say,
That earthless must green meadés sooné dey.[7] 532

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"Thus, hearté mine! for Antenor, alas!
I soon shall be ychangéd, as I ween;
But how shall ye do in this woful case?
How shall your tender hearté thus sustain?
But, hearté mine! forget this sorrow' and tene,[8]
And me also; for, sothly for to say,
So ye well fare, I retch[9] not for to dey."[7] 539

How might it ever read ybeen or sung
The plaintés that she made in her distress?
I n'ot,[10] but as for me, my little tongue,
If I discriven would her heaviness,
It should ymake her sorrow seemé less
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Her high complaint, and therefore I it pass. 546

Pandarus, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Creseid', as ye have heard devise,[11]
That for the best it was accorded thus,
And he full glad to do him that servíce
Unto Creseid' in a full secret wise,

[1] Swith—quickly. [2] Sith—times. [3] Lith—assuage. [4] Twin—separate. [5] Fine—end. [6] Kindly—natural. [7] Dey—die. [8] Tene—grief. [9] Retch—care. [10] N'ot—know not. [11] Devise—describe.

There as she lay in torment and in rage,
Came her to tell all wholly his messáge; 553

And found that she herselven 'gan to treat
Full piteously, for with her salté tears
Her breast and face ibathéd was full wet,
Her mighty tressés of her sunnish hairs
Unbroiden hangen all about her ears,
Which gaven him very signal mattere
Of death, which that her hearté 'gan desire. 560

When she him saw she 'gan for sorrow' anon
Her teary face atwixt her armés hide,
For which this Pandare is so woe begone
That in the house he might unneth[1] abide,
As he that felt sorrow on every side,
For if Creseid' had erst complainéd sore
Then 'gan she plain a thousand timés more, 567

And in her aspre[2] plainté thus she said;
"Pandare, my eme,[3] of joyés more than two
Was causé, causing first to me Creseid',
That now transmuted be in cruel woe,
Whe'r[4] shall I say to you welcome or no,
That alderfirst[5] me brought unto servíce
Of love, alas! that endeth in such wise? 574

"Endeth then love in woe? yea, or man lieth,
And every worldly bliss, as thinketh me;
The end of bliss aye sorrow occupieth;
And who so troweth not that it so be,
Let him upon me woful wretché see,
That myself hate, and aye my birthé curse,
Feeling alway from wick I go to worse. 581

"Whoso me seeth, seeth sorrow all atonés,
Pain, torment, woe, and plaint, and eke distress;
Out of my woful body harm there none is,
As langour, anguish, cruel bitterness,
Annoy, smart, dread, fury, and eke sickness:
I trow iwis[6] from heaven tearés rain
For pity of my aspre'[2] and cruel pain." 588

"O thou my sister! full of discomfort,
(Quod Pandarus) what thinkest thou to do?
Why n' hast thou to thyselven some resport?[7]
Why wilt thou thus thyself, alas! fordo?[8]
Leave all this work, and take now heedé to

[1] Unneth — scarcely. [2] Aspre — rough, sharp. [3] Eme — uncle. [4] Whe'r—whether. [5] Alderfirst—first of all. [6] Iwis—of a truth, I believe. [7] Resport—respect: one of the poet's licences. [8] Fordo—destroy.

That I shall say, and hearken' of good intent
This message that thy Troilus thee sent." 595

.Turnéd her then Creseid' a woe making
So great, that it a death was for to see :
"Alas! (quod she) what wordés may ye bring,
What will my dear heart senden unto me,
Which that I dreadé never more to see?
Will he have plaint or tearés ere I wend?
I have enough if he thereafter send." 602

She was right such to see in her viságe
As is that wight that men on bier ybind,
Her facé, like of paradise th' imáge,
Was all ichangéd in another kind;
The play, the laughter, men were wont to find
In her, and eke her joyés evereach one,
Been fled; and thus li'th Creseida alone. 609

About her eyen two a purple ring
Bitrent,[1] in sothfast [2] tokening of her pain,
That to behold it was a deadly thing,
For which Pandárus ne might not restrain
The tearés from his eyén for to rain;
But nathéless, as he best might, he said,
From Troilus these wordés to Creseid.' 616

* * * * *

Which were, that she would allow him to come to her that evening, that they might "devise some remedy" for their sorrow.]

"Great is my woe, (quod she, and sighéd sore,)
As she that feeleth deadly sharp distress,
But yet to me his sorrow' is muchel more,
That love him bet than he himself I guess.
Alas! for me hath he such heaviness?
Can he for me so piteously complain?
Iwis [3] this sorrow doubleth all my pain. 623

"Grievous to me, God wot, it is to twin,[4]
(Quod she) but yet it harder is to me
To see that sorrow which that he is in,
For well wot I it will my bané be,
And die I will in certain then (quod she :)
But bid him come ere Death, that thus me threateth,
Drive out that ghost which in mine heart ybeateth."

[1] Bitrent—encircled. [2] Sothfast—sure. [3] Iwis—in truth. [4] Twin—part.

V. 605. *paradise the image.*] I do not profess to discover the drift of the poet's simile in this "image,"—or indeed what he means at all.

These wordés said, she on her armés two 631
Fell gruff, and 'gan to weepen piteously.
(Quod Pandarus) "Alas! why do ye so,
Since ye well wot the time is fasté by
That he shall come? arise up hastily,
That he you not beweepen thus yfind,
But ye will have him wood[1] out of his mind." 637

* * * * *

"Go, (quod Creseid') and, uncle, truely
I shall do all my might me to restrain
From weeping in his sight, and busily
Him for to glad I shall do all my pain,
And in my hearté seeken every vein:
If to this sore there may be founden salve,
It shall not lack certáin on my behalve." 644

Go'th Pandarus, and Troilus he sought,
Till in a temple' he found him all alone,
As he that of his life no longer raught,[2]
But to the piteous goddés evereachone
Full tenderly he pray'd and made his moan,
To do him soon out of this world to pace,
For well he thought there was no other grace. 651

And, shortly, all the sothé[3] for to say,
He was so fallen in despair that day,
That utterly he shope[4] him for to die;
For right thus was his argument alway,
He said he n'as but lorné,[5] welaway![6]
For all that cometh, cometh by necessity:
Thus to be lorne it is my destiny. 658

* * * * *

[Here follows a long argument upon Predestination; which, at such a conjuncture, and proceeding from a person whose mind at the time is wrought by so stern a sorrow, is singularly misapplied. At the conclusion, Pandarus informs him that Creseida expects him at home, and that he thinks she has "somewhat in her heart's privity, which will disturb the evil he so sorely dreads."]

This Troilus answer'd, and sighéd sore,
"Thou say'st right well, and I will do right so;"
And what him list he said unto him more:
And when that it was timé for to go,
Full privily himself withouten mo
Unto her came, as he was wont to done,
And how they wrought I shall you tellen soon. 665

[1] Wood — mad, raving. [2] Raught — cared. [3] Sothe — truth. [4] Shope—prepared. [5] Lorne—lost, ruined. [6] Welaway—alas.

Soth is, that when they gonnen first to meet
So 'gan the pain their heartés for to twist,
That neither of them other mighté greet,
But them in armés took and after kiss'd;
The lessé woful of them both ne wist
Whe'r that he was, ne might one word out bring,
As I said erst, for woe and for sobbing. 672

The woful tearés that they leten fall
As bitter werén, out of tearés kind,[1]
For pain, as is ligne[2] aloés or gall;
So bitter tearés wept not, as I find,
The woful Myrrha through the bark and rind;
That in this world there n'is so hard a heart
That n'old have ruéd on their painés smart. 679

But when their woful weary ghostés twain
Returnéd been there as they ought to dwell,
And that somewhat to weaken 'gan the pain
By length of plaint, and ebben 'gan the well
Of their salt tearés, and the heart unswell;
With broken voice, all hoarse for shright,[3] Creseid'
To Troilus these ilké wordés said: 686

"O Jove! I die, and mercy thee beseech;
Help, Troilus:" and therewithal her face
Upon his breast she laid, and lost her speech,
Her woful spirit from his proper place
Right with the word away in point to pace:[4]
And thus she li'th with hués pale and green
That whilom fresh and fairest was to seen. 693

This Troilus that on her 'gan behold,
Cleping[5] her name, and she lay as for dead,
Withouten answer, and felt her limbés cold,
Her eyen throwen upward to her head,
This sorrowful man can now no other rede,[6]
But often time her coldé mouth he kiss'd:
Where him was woe, God and himself it wist.[7] 700

He riseth up, and long strait he her laid,
For sign of life for aught he can or may
Can he none find in nothing of Creseid',
For which his song full oft is Welaway![8]
But when he saw that speechéless she lay,

[1] Out of teares kind—out of the nature of tears. [2] Ligne aloes—lignum aloes. [3] Shright—shrieking. [4] In point to pace—ready to flit. [5] Cleping—calling. [6] Can now no other rede—is wholly at a loss. [7] It wist—where his sorrow lay, God and himself knew. [8] Welaway—alas.

With sorrowful voice, and heart of bliss all bare,
He said, how she was from this world ifare.[1] 707

So after that he long had her complain'd,
His handés wrung, and said what was to say,
And with his tearés salt her breast berain'd,
He 'gan those tearés wipen off full drey,
And piteously 'gan for the soulé pray,
And said; "O Lord! that set art in thy throne,
Rue eke on me, for I shall follow' her soon." 714

She cold was, and withouten sentiment,[2]
For aught he wot, for breath yet felt he none,
And this was him a pregnant argument
That she was forth out of this world agone;
And when he saw there was no other won[3]
He 'gan her limbés dress in such mannere
As men do them that shall be laid on bier. 721

And after this with stern and cruel heart
His sword anon out of his sheath he twight,[4]
Himself to slay, how sore so that him smart,
So that his soul her soul followen might
There as the doom of Minos would it dight,[5]
Sith Love and cruel Fortune it ne would
That in this world he longer liven should. 728

Then said he thus, fulfill'd of high disdain;
"O cruel Jove! and thou Fortúne adverse!
This all and some is, falsely have ye slain
Creseid', and sith ye may do me no worse,
Fie on your might and workés so diverse!
Thus cowardly ye shall me never win;
There shall no death me from my lady twin.[6] 735

"For I this world, sith ye have slain her thus,
Will let,[7] and follow' her spirit low or high;
Shall never lover say that Troilus
Dare not for fearé with his lady die,
For certain I will bear her company;
But sith ye will not suffer' us liven here,
Yet suff'reth that our soulés be ifere.[8] 742

"And thou, Cityé! in which I live in woe,
And thou, Priám! and brethren all ifere!
And thou, my mother! farewell, for I go,
And Atropos! make ready thou my bier,
And thou, Creseidé! O sweet hearté dear!

[1] Ifare — departed. [2] Sentiment — sensation. [3] Won — way. [4] Twight — plucked. [5] Would it dight — where the judgment of Minos should affix, or arrange, it. [6] Twin—separate. [7] Let—leave. [8] Ifere—in company.

Receive thou now my spirit," would he say,
With sword at heart, all ready for to dey. 749

But as God would of swoon she then abraid,[1]
And 'gan to sigh, and "Troilus!" she cried;
And he answeréd; "Lady mine, Creseid'!
Liven ye yet?" and let his sword down glide.
"Yea, hearté mine! that thankéd be Cupid,"
(Quod she) and therewithal she soré sight,[2]
And he began to glad her as he might; 756

Took her in armés two, and kiss'd her oft,
And her to glad he did all his intent,
For which her ghost, that flickered aye aloft,
Into her woful heart again it went;
But at the last, as that her eyen glent[3]
Aside, anon she 'gan his sword espy
As it lay bare, and 'gan for fear to cry. 763

And askéd him why he had it out draw?
And Troilus anon the cause her told,
And how himself therewith he would have slaw;[4]
For which Creseid' upon him 'gan behold,
And 'gan him in her armés fast to fold,
And said; "O mercy, God! lo which a deed!
Alas! how nigh we weren bothé dead! 770

"Then if I ne haddé spoken, as grace was,
Ye would have slain yourself anon?" quod she.
"Yea, doubtéless." And she answer'd; "Alas!
For by that ilké Lord that madé me
I n' olde a furlong way alive have be,
After your death, to have been crownéd queen
Of all the land the sun on shineth sheen;[5] 777

"But with this selvé sword which that here is
My self I would have slainé (quod she) tho,[6]
But ho! for we have right enough of this,
And let us rise and strait to beddé go,
And there let us yspeaken of our woe,
For by that morter[7] which that I see brenne
Know I full well that day is not far henne." 784

When they were in their bed in armés fold,
Naught was it like those nightés here beforn,
For piteously each other 'gan behold,
As they that hadden all their bliss ilorn,[8]
Bewailing all the day that they were born,

[1] Abraid — awaked. [2] Sight — sighed. [3] Glent — glanced. [4] Slaw—slain. [5] Sheen—bright. [6] Tho—then. [7] Morter — lamp. [8] Ilorn—lost.

Till at the last this woful wight Creseid'
To Troilus these ilké wordés said : 791

" Lo, hearté mine! well wot ye this, (quod she)
That if a wight alway his woe complain,
And seeketh not how holpen for to be,
It n'is but folly and increase of pain ;
And since that here assembled be we twain
To finden bote[1] of woe that we be in,
It were all time right soon for to begin. 798

" I am a woman, as full well ye wot,
And as I am aviséd[2] suddenly,
So will I tell it you while it is hot :
Me thinketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Ought half this woe to maken skilfully,[3]
For there is art enough for to redress
What yet is 'miss, and flee this heaviness. 805

" Soth is, the woe the which that we be in,
For aught I wot, for nothing ellés is
But for the causé that we should ytwin ;[4]
Consider'd all there is no more amiss :
And what is then a remedy' unto this
But that we shape us sooné for to meet ?
This all and some is, my dear hearté sweet ! 812

" Now that I shall well bringen it about
To come again soon after that I go,
Thereof am I no manner thing in doubt,
For dredéless[5] within a week or two
I shall be here ; and that it may be so
By allé right, and that in wordés few,
I shall you well a heap of wayés show ; 819

" For which I will not maken long sermón,
For time ilost may not recovered be,
But I will go to my conclusión,
And to the best in aught that I can see ;
And for the love of God forgive it me
If I speak aught against your heartés rest,
For truély I speak it for the best ; 826

" Making alway a protestatión,
That in effect this thing that I shall say
Is but to showen you my motión
To find unto our help the besté way,
And taketh it no otherwise I pray ;
For, finally, what so ye me command
That will I do, for that is no demand. 833

[1] Bote—end. [2] Avised—thought of, reflected upon. [3] Skilfully—reasonably. [4] Ytwin—separate. [5] Dredeless—doubtless.

"Now hearkeneth this: Ye have well understood
My going granted is by parliament,
So farforth that it may not be withstood
For all this world, as by my judgément;
And sith there helpeth no avisément[1]
To letten[2] it, let it pass out of mind,
And let us shape a better way to find. 840

"The soth is this; the twinning[3] of us twain
Will us disease[4] and cruelly annoy,
But him behoveth sometime haven pain
That serveth Love, if that he will have joy;
And sith I shall no farther out of Troy
Than I may ride again on half a morrow,
It ought the lessé cause us for to sorrow; 847

"So as I shall not now be hid in mew,[5]
That day by day, mine owné hearté dear!
Since well ye wot that it is now a trewe,[6]
Ye shall full well all mine estate yhear,
And ere that truce is done I shall be here;
And thus have ye both Antenor iwon
And me also. Be glad now if ye con. 854

"And think right thus, Creseid' is now agone,
But what? she shall come hastily again."
"And when? alas!"—"By God, lo, right anon,
Ere dayés ten, this dare I safely sain,
And then as erst shall we be bothé fain,[7]
So as we shall together ever dwell,
That all this world ne might our blissé tell. 861

"I see that oft time, whereas we be now,
That for the best, our counsel for to hide,
Ye speaké not with me nor I with you
In forténight, ne see you go ne ride;
And may ye not ten dayés then abide,
For mine honóur, in such an áventure?
Iwis ye may, or ellés lite[8] endure. 868

"Ye know eke how that all my kin is here
But if that only it my father be,
And eke mine other thingés all ifere,[9]
And namély my dearé hearté ye,
Whom that I n'olde leaven for to see[10]

[1] Avisement—planning. [2] Letten—prevent. [3] Twinning—separating. [4] Disease—discomfort. [5] Mew—cage. [6] Trewe—truce. [7] Fain—glad. [8] Lite—little. [9] Ifere—together. [10] N'olde leaven for to see—whom I would not cease from beholding.

For all this world, as wide as it hath space,
Or ellés see I never Jové's face. 875

"Why trowen ye my father in this wise
Covéteth so to see me, but for dread
Lest in this town that folkés me despise
Because of him for his unhappy deed?
What wot my father what life that I lead?
For if he wist in Troy how well I fare
Us needed for my wending[1] not to care. 882

"Ye see that every day eke more and more
Men treat of peace; and it supposed is
That men the Queen Helena shall restore,
And Greekés us restore that is amiss;
So though there ne were comfort none but this,
That men purposen peace on every side,
Ye may the bet at ease of heart abide: 889

"For if that it be peace, mine hearté dear!
The nature of the peace must needés drive
That men must intercommunén ifere,[2]
And to and fro eke ride and go as blive
All day as thick as bees fly from a hive,
And every wight have liberty to bleve[3]
Where as he list, the bet withouten leave. 896

"And though so be that peace there may be none,
Yet hither, though there never peace ne were,
I must ycome, for whither should I gone?
Or how, mischancé! should I dwellen there
Among those men of armés ever' in fear?
For which, as wisely God my soulé rede,[4]
I cannot see whereof ye shoulden drede. 903

"Have here another way, if it so be
That all this thing ne may you not suffice:
My father, as ye knowen well pardé,
Is holden old and full of covetise,
And I right now have founden all the guise[5]
Withouten net wherewith I shall him hent,[6]
And hearkeneth now if that ye will assent. 910

"Lo! Troilus, men say, that 'full hard 'tis
The wolfé full and the wether whole to have;'
This is to say, that men full oft iwis[7]
Must spenden part the remnant for to save;
For aye with gold men may the heart ygrave

[1] Wending — going. [2] Intercommunen ifere — confer together. [3] Bleve — stay. [4] Soule rede — as surely God direct my soul. [5] Guise—manner. [6] Hent—catch. [7] Iwis—certainly.

Of him that is set upon covetise;
And how I mean I shall it you devise. 917

"The movable which I have in this town
Unto my father shall I take, and say,
That right for trust and for salvatión
It sent is from a friend of his or tway,
The which friendés do fervently him pray
To senden after more, and that in hie,[1]
While that this town stant thus in jeopardy; 924

"And that shall be of gold huge quantity;
Thus shall I say, but lest folk it espied,
This may be sent by no wight but by me:
I shall eke showen him, if peace betide,
What friendés that I have on every side
To do the wrath of Priamus to pace[2]
Towardés him, and do him stand in grace. 931

"So what for one thing and for other, sweet!
I shall him so enchanten with my saws,
That right in heaven his soulé shall he mete:[3]
For, all Apollo or his clerkés laws,
Or calculing, availeth not three haws;
Desire of gold shall so his soulé blend[4]
That as me list I shall well make an end." 938

* * * * *

This Troilus, with heart and earés spread,
Heard all this thing deviséd to and fro,
And verily it seeméd that he had
The selven wit,[5] but yet to let her go
His hearté misforgave him evermo;
But finally he 'gan his hearté wrest[6]
To trusten her, and took it for the best. 945

* * * * *

But nathéless the wending[7] of Creseid',
For all this world may not out of his mind,
For which full oft he piteously her pray'd
That of her hest[8] he might her true yfind,
And said her; "Certés if ye be unkind,
And but[9] ye come at day set into Troy,
Ne shall I ne'er have heal,[10] honór, ne joy: 952

[1] Hie—haste. [2] Priamus to pace—to make the wrath of Priamus towards him to pass away, and reinstate him in favour. [3] Mete—dream. [4] Blend—blind. [5] The selven wit—the same opinion. [6] Wrest—compel. [7] Wending—going away. [8] Hest—promise. [9] But—unless. [10] Heal—health.

"For all so sothe as sun uprist to-morrow,
And God so wisely thou me woful wretch
To rest ybring out of this cruil sorrow,
I will my selven sley if that ye dretche;[1]
But of my death though little be to retche,[2]
Yet ere that ye me causen so to smart,
Dwell rather here mine owné dear sweet heart! 959

* * * * *

"I n'ot if peace shall ever more betide,
But peace or no, for earnest ne for game,
I wote, sith Calchas on the Greekés side
Hath onis been, and lost so foul his name,
He dare no more come here again for shame,
For which that we, for aught I can espy,
To trusten on n'is but a fantasy. 966

* * * * *

"For which with humble, true, and piteous heart
A thousand timés mercy I you pray,
So rueth on mine asper[3] paines smart,
And do somewhat as that I shall you say,
And let us steal away betwixt us tway,
And think that folly is when man may choose
For accident his substance for to lose. 973

"I meané thus, that since we may ere day
Well steal away, and be together so,
What wit were it to putten in essay
(In case ye shoulden to your father go)
If that ye mighten come again or no?
Thus mean I, that it were a great folly
To put that sikerness[4] in jeopardy. 980

"And, vulgarly to speaken of substánce,
Of treasure may we bothé with us lead
Enough to live in honour and pleasánce
Until the timé that we shall be dead;
And thus we may eschewen all this dread:—
For every other way ye can record
My heart iwis[5] may therewith not accord. 987

"And hardily[6] ne dreadeth no poverte,
For I have kin and friendés ellés where,
That though we comen in our baré shirt
Us shouldé never lack ne gold ne gear,
But be honóuréd while we dweltén there:

[1] Dretche—Sax. delay, relax. [2] Retche—Sax. care for. [3] Asper—sharp, rough. [4] Sikerness—certainty. [5] Iwis—truly. [6] Hardily—boldly.

And go we' anon, for as in mine intent
This is the best, if that ye will assent." 994

Creseida with a sigh right in this wise
Answeréd him ; " Iwis, my dear heart true!
We may well steal away as ye devise,
And finden such unthrifty wayés new,
But afterward full sore it will us rue ;
And help me God so at my mosté need
As causéless ye suffer all this drede. 1001

* * * * *

" And thou, Simois, that as an arrow clear
Through Troy runnest aye downward to the sea,
Be witness of this word that said is here,
That thilké day that I untrué be
To Troilus, mine owné hearté free! [1]
That thou return backward unto thy well,[2]
And I with body and soulé sink to hell. 1008

" But that ye speak away thus for to go,
And letten[3] all your friendés, God forbid
For any woman that ye shoulden so !
And namély, since Troy hath now such need
Of help; and eke of one thing taketh heed,
If this were wist, my life lay in balánce
And your honóur, God shield us from mischance! 1015

" And if so be that peace hereafter take,
As all day happeth after angry game,
Why, Lord ! the sorrow' and woe ye woulden make
That ye ne durst comen again for shame!
And ere that ye jeopárden so your name
Be not too hasty in this hotté fare;
For hasty man ne wanteth never care. 1022

" What trow ye the peopl' eke all about
Would of it say? it is full light t' arede ; [4]
They woulden say, and swear it out of doubt,
That love ne drove you not to do this deed,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede :
Thus were all lost iwis,[5] mine hearté dear !
Your honour, which that now so shineth clear. 1029

" And also thinketh on my honesty,
That flow'reth yet, how foul I should it shend,[6]
And with what filth it spotted shouldé be,
If in this form I shouldé with you wend : [7]
Nor though I liv'd unto the worldés end

[1] Free — bountiful. [2] Well — spring. [3] Letten — leave, desert. [4] T' arede — to pronounce. [5] Iwis — indeed. [6] Shend — destroy. [7] Wend—go.

My namé should I never' againward win :
Thus were I lost, and that were ruth and sin. 1036

* * * * *

"And trusteth this, that certés, hearté sweet !
Ere Phœbus' sister, Lucina the sheen,
The Lion passeth out of this Arite[1]
I will be here withouten any ween ;[2]
I mean, as help me Juno, heaven's queen,
The tenth day, but if that death me assail,
I will you see withouten any fail." 1043

"And now, so this be soth (quod Troilus)
I shall well suffer unto the tenth day,
Since that I see that need it must be thus ;
But for the love of God, if it be may,[3]
So let us stealen privily away,
For ever in one[4] as for to live in rest ;
My hearté sayeth that it will be the best." 1050

"O mercy, God ! what life is this ? (quod she)
Alas ! ye slay me thus for very teen :[5]
I see well now that ye mistrusten me,
For by your wordés it is well iseen :
Now for the love of Cynthia the sheen
Mistrust me not thus causéless for ruth,
Since to be true I have you plight my truth. 1057

* * * * *

"For, if ye wist how sore it doth me smart,
Ye wouldé cease of this ; for God thou wo'st[6]
The puré spirit yweepeth in my heart
To see you weepen which that I love most,
And that I must go to the Greekés host;
Yea, n'ere it that I wist a remedy[7]
To come again, right here I wouldé die. 1064

* * * * *

"And o'er all this I pray you, quod she tho,[8]
Mine owné heartés sothfast suffisance ![9]
Sith I am thine all whole withouten mo,
That while that I am absent, no pleasánce
Of other do me from your rémembrance,
For I am e'er aghast ; for why ? men rede[10]
That love is thing aye full of busy drede. 1071

[1] Arite—Aries, (one of the signs of the zodiac). [2] Withouten ween—without supposition, certainly. [3] Be may—can be. [4] Ever in one—continually. [5] Teen—anger. [6] Wo'st—knowest. [7] Wist a remedy—were it not that I knew a remedy. [8] Tho—then. [9] Sothfast suffisance—true satisfaction. [10] Rede—say, inform.

"For in this world there liveth lady none,
If that ye were untrue, as God defend!
That so betrayéd were or woe begone
As I, that allé truth in you intend;
And doubtéless if that I other ween'd[1]
I n'ere but dead, and ere ye cause yfind
For Goddés love so be me naught unkind." 1078

To this answeréd Troilus, and said,
"Now God, to whom there is no cause awry,
Me glad, as wis[2] I never to Creseid',
Sith thilké day I saw her first with eye,
Was false, nor ever shall till that I die:
At short wordés, well ye may me believe;
I can no more; it shall be found at preve."[3] 1085

"Grand mercy, good heart mine! iwis,[4] (quod she)
And, blissful Venus! let me never sterve[5]
Ere I may stand of pleasance in degree
To quite him well that so well can deserve;
And while that God my wit will me conserve
I shall so do, so true I have you found,
That aye honóur to me-ward shall rebound: 1092

"For trusteth well that your estate royal,
Nor vain delight, nor only[6] worthiness
Of you in war or tourney martiál,
Nor pomp, array, nobley,[7] or eke richess,
Ne maden me to rue on your distress,
But moral virtue, grounded upon truth;—
That was the cause I first had on you ruth: 1099

"Eke gentle heart, and manhood that ye had,
And that ye had (as me thought) in despite[8]
Evéry thing that sounéd into bad,[9]
As rudéness, and peoplish[10] appetite,
And that your reason bridled your delight;
This made aboven ev'ry creáture
That I was yours, and shall while I may dure. 1106

And this may length of yearés not fordo,
Ne remuable[11] Fortuné deface,
But Jupiter, that of his might may do[12]
The sorrowful be glad, so give us grace
Ere nightés ten to meeten in this place,

[1] Ween'd — thought. [2] Wis — truly. [3] Preve— proof. [4] Iwis — indeed. [5] Sterve — die. [6] Only — single. [7] Nobley — nobility. [8] Despite — hatred. [9] Souned into bad — verged towards bad. [10] Peoplish—vulgar. [11] Remuable—removable, changeable. [12] Do —make.

So that it may your heart and mine suffice :—
And fare now well, for time is that ye rise." 1113

And after that they long iplainéd had,
And oft ikiss'd, and strait in armés fold,
The day 'gan rise, and Troilus him clad,
And ruefully his lady 'gan behold,
As he that felt of deathés carés cold ;
And to her grace he 'gan him recommand ;
Where he was woe this hold I no demand : 1120

For mannés head imaginen ne can,
Ne' entendément[1] consider, nor tongue tell,
The cruel painés of this woful man,
That passen every torment down in hell ;
For when he saw that she ne might ydwell,
(Which that his soul out of his body rent,)
Withouten more, out of the chamber' he went. 1127

BOOK V.

APPROACHEN 'gan the fatal destiny
That Jovis hath in dispositión,
And to you angry Parcæ, sistren three,
Committeth to do executión,
For which Creseida must out of the town,
And Troilus shall dwellen forth in pine
Till Lachesis his thread no longer twine. 7

The golden tresséd Phœbus high on loft
Thriés had allé with his beamés clear
The snowés molt, and Zephirus as oft
Ibrought again the tender leavés green,
Since that the son of Hecuba the Queen
Began to love her first, for whom his sorrow
Was all, that she departen should a-morrow. 14

Full ready was at primé[2] Diomed
Creseid' unto the Greekés host to lead ;
For sorrow' of which she felt her hearté bleed,
As she that ne wist what was best to rede :[3]
And truély, as men in bookés read,
Men wisté never woman have the care,
Ne was so loth out of a town to fare. 21

[1] Entendement—understanding. [2] Prime—early in the morning. Rede—advise.

This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
As man that hath his joyés eke forlore,
Was waiting on his lady evermore,
As she that was the sothfast crop [1] and more
Of all his lust or joyés heretofore;
But Troilus, now farewell all thy joy!
For shalt thou never see her eft [2] in Troy. 28

Soth is, that while he bode in this mannere
He 'gan his woe full manly for to hide,
That well unneth [3] it seen was in his cheer,
But at the gaté there she should out ride
With certain folk he hovéd [4] her t' abide,
So woe begone, al' would he not him plain
That on his horse unneth he sat for pain. 35

For ire he quoke, so 'gan his hearté gnaw,
When Diomed on horse 'gan him to dress,
And said unto himself this ilké saw;
"Alas! (quod he) thus foul a wretchedness
Why suffer' I it? why n'ill I it redress?
Were it not bet at onés for to die
Than evermore in languor thus to drie? [5] 42

"Why n'ill I make at onés rich and poor
To have enough to do ere that she go?
Why n'ill I bring all Troy upon a roar?
Why n'ill I slay this Diomed also?
Why n'ill I rather with a man or two
Steal her away? why will I this endure?
Why n'ill I helpen to mine owné cure?" 49

But why he n'oldé do so fell a deed
That shall I say, and why him list it spare:
He had in heart alway a manner dread
Lest that Creseid', in rumour of this fare,
Should have been slain: lo! this was all his care,
And ellés certain, as I sayéd yore,
He had it done withouten wordés more. 56

Creseida, when she ready was to ride,
Full sorrowfully sigh'd, and said Alas!
But forth she must for aught that may betide,
And forth she rode a full sobérly pace;
There is no other remedy' in this case:
What wonder is though that her soré smart
When she forgoeth her own sweeté heart? 63

[1] Crop—summit. [2] Eft—again. [3] Unneth—scarcely was discovered in his behaviour. [4] Hoved—hovered. [5] Drie—suffer.

This Troilus in guise of courtesy,
With hawk on hand, and with a hugé rout
Of knightés, rode and did her company,
Ypassing all the valley far without,
And farther would have ridden out of doubt
Full fain, and woe was him to go so soon,
But turn he must, and it was eke so done. 70

And right with that was Antenor icome
Out of the Greekés host, and every wight
Was of him glad, and said he was welcome;
And Troilus, all n'ere his hearté light,
He pained him with all his fullé might
Him to withhold of weeping at the least,
And Antenor he kiss'd, and made great feast. 77

And therewithal he must his leave ytake,
And cast his eye upon her piteously,
And near he rode, his causé for to make,
To take her by the hand all soberly;
And Lord! so she 'gan weepen tenderly,
And he full soft and slyly 'gan her say,
"Now hold your day, and do me not to dey."[1] 84

With that his courser turnéd he about
With face full pale, and unto Diomed
No word he spake, ne none of all his rout,
Of which the son of Tydeus took heed,
As he that couthé moré than the creed[2]
In such a craft, and by the rein her hent,
And Troilus to Troy homewardés went. 91

This Diomed, that led her by the bridle,
When that he saw the folk of Troy away,
Thought, "All my labour shall not be on idle[3]
If that I may, for somewhat shall I say,
For at the worst it shorten may our way;
I have heard say eke timés twicé twelve,
He is a fool that will forget him selve." 98

But nathéless this thought he well enough,
"That certainly I am abouten naught
If that I speak of love, or make it tought,[4]
For doubtéless if she have in her thought
Him that I guess, he may not be ibrought
So soon away; but I shall find a mean[5]
That she not yet weet shall what that I mean." 105

[1] Dey—die. [2] More than the creed—a proverbial expression, "as he who was intimately acquainted with the meaning of Troilus." [3] On idle—in vain. [4] Tought—tight: I do not perceive the application of the term in this sense. [5] Mean—medium.

This Diomed, as he that could his good,[1]
When this was done 'gan fallen forth in speech
Of this and that, and asken why she stood
In such disease?[2] and 'gan her eke beseech,
That if that he encreasen might or eche[3]
With any thing her easé that she should
Command it him, and said he do it would: 112

For truély he swore her as a knight
That there n'as thing with which he might her please
That he n'olde do his pain and all his might
To do it, for to do her heart an ease,
And prayéd her she would her sorrow' appease,
And said; "Iwis[4] we Greekés can have joy
To honour you as well as folk of Troy." 119

He said eke thus; "I wot you thinketh strange
No wonder is, for it is to you new,
Th' acquaintance of these Trojans for to change
For folk of Greece, which that ye never knew;
But wouldé never God, but if as true
A Greek ye should among us all yfind
As any Trojan is, and eke as kind. 126

"And by the cause I swore you, lo! right now
To be your friend, and help you to my might,
And for that more acquaintance eke of you
Have I had than another stranger wight,
So from this forth I pray you day and night
Commandeth me, how sore so that me smart,
To do all that may like unto your heart: 133

"And that ye me would as your brother treat,
And taketh not my friendship in despite;
And though your sorrows be for thingés great,
Know I not why, but out of more respite
Mine heart hath for t' amend it great delight,
And if I may your harmés not redress
I am right sorry for your heaviness: 140

"For though ye Trojans with us Greekés wroth
Have many' a day been, alway yet pardé
One god of Love in soth we serven both:
And for the love of God, my lady free,[5]
Whom so ye hate as be not wroth with me,
For truély there can no wight you serve
That half so loth your wrathé would deserve. 147

[1] Could his good—knew his interest. [2] Disease—disquiet. [3] Eche—add. [4] Iwis—in truth. [5] Free—bountiful.

"And n'ere it that we be so near the tent
Of Calchas, which that see us bothé may,
I would of this you tell all mine intent;
But this enscaléd till another day:
Give me your hand; I am and shall be aye,
God help me so, while that my life may dure,
Your own aboven ev'ry creáture. 154

"Thus said I ne'er ere now to woman born,
For God my heart as wisely[1] gladdé so
I lovéd never woman here beforn
As paramours, ne never shall no mo;
And for the love of God be not my foe,
Al' can I not to you, my lady dear!
Complain aright, for I am yet to lere.[2] 161

"And wond'reth naught, mine owné lady bright!
Though that I speak of love to you thus blive,[3]
For I have heard ere this of many' a wight
That lovéd thing he ne'er saw in his live;
Eke I am not of power for to strive
Against the god of Love, but him obey
I will alway, and mercy I you pray. 168

"There be so worthy knightés in this place,
And ye so fair, that evereach of them all
Will painen him to standen in your grace;
But might to me so fair a grace befall
That ye me for your servant wouldé call,
So lowly ne so truély you serve
N'ill none of them as I shall till I sterve."[4] 175

Creseid' unto that purpose lite[5] answer'd,
As she that was with sorrow' oppresséd so,
That in effect she naught his talés heard,
But here and there now here a word or two;
Her thought her sorrowful hearté burst a-two,
For when she 'gan her father far espy
Well nigh down off her horse she 'gan to sie.[6] 182

But nathéless she thanketh Diomed
Of all his travail and his goodé cheer,
And that him list[7] his friendship to her bid,
And she accepteth it in good mannere,
And will do fain[8] that is him lefe and dear,
And trusten him she would, and well she might,
As sayéd she, and from her horse she' alight. 189

[1] Wisely — surely. [2] Lere — learn. [3] Blive — early, quickly. [4] Sterve—die. [5] Lite—little. [6] Sie—fall. [7] Him list—that he was pleased. [8] Do fain—will gladly perform what may be agreeable to him.

Her father hath her in his armés nome,[1]
And twenty times he kiss'd his daughter sweet,
And said; "O dearé daughter mine! welcome."
She said eke she was fain with him to meet,
And stood forth still, mild, mute, and mansuete.[2]
But here I leave her with her father dwell,
And forth I will of Troilus you tell. 196

To Troy is come this woful Troilus
In sorrow aboven all sorrowés smart,
With felon look and with face despiteous,[3]
Then suddenly down from his horse he start,
And through his palace with a swollen heart
To chamber went; of nothing took he heed,
Ne none to him dare speak one word for drede. 203

And there his sorrows that he sparéd[4] had
He gave an issue large, and "Death!" he cried,
And in his throwés frénetic and mad
He curseth Jove, Apollo, and Cupid,
He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cyprid,[5]
His birth, himself, his fate, and eke Natúre,
And, save his lady, ev'ry creáture. 210

To bed he go'th, and waileth there and turneth
In fury as doeth Ixion in hell,
And in this wise he nigh till day sojóurneth,
But then began his heart alite[6] unswell
Through tearés which that gonnén up to well,[7]
And piteously he cried upon Creseid',
And to himself right thus he spake and said: 217

"Where is mine owné lady lefe[8] and dear?
Where is her whité breast? where is it? where?
Where be her armés and her eyen clear
That yesterday this timé with me were?
Now may I weep aloné many a tear,
And grasp about I may, but in this place
Save a pillow I find naught to embrace. 224

"How shall I do? when shall she come again?
I n'ot, alas! Why let I her so go?
As wouldé God I had as then been slain!
O hearté mine, Creseid'! O sweeté foe!
O lady mine! that I love and no mo,
To whom for evermore mine heart I vow,
See how I die; ye n'ill me not rescow! 231

[1] Nome—taken. [2] Mansuete—gentle. [3] Despiteous—enraged. [4] Spared—restrained. [5] Cyprid—Venus. [6] Alite—a little. [7] Well—spring. [8] Lefe—precious.

"Who seeth you now, my right lodéstar?
Who sitteth now or stant in your presénce?
Who can comfórten now your heartés war,
Now I am gone? whom give ye audience?
Who speaketh for me now in my absence?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I, as ill as I ye fare. 238

"How should I thus ten dayés full endure
When I the first night haven all this tene?[1]
And how shall she eke, sorrowful creature,
For tenderness how shall she this sustain
Such woe for me? O! piteous, pale, and green,
Shall waxen be her fresh wománly face
For languor ere she turn unto this place." 245

And when he fęll in any slumberings
Anon begin he shouldé for to groan,
And dreamen of the dreadfullesté things
That might ybe, as mete[2] he were alone
In place horríble, making aye his moan,
Or meten that he was amongés all
His enemies, and in their handés fall. 252

And therewithal his body shouldé start,
And with the start all suddenly awake,
And such a tremor feel about his heart,
That of the fear his body shouldé quake,
And therewithal he should a noise ymake,
And seem as though he should yfallen deep,
From high aloft; and then he wouldé weep, 259

And ruén on himself so piteously,
That wonder was to hear his fantasy;
Another time he shouldé mightily
Comfórt himself, and say it was folly
So causéless such dread and woe to drie,[3]
And eft[4] begin his asper sorrows new,
That every man might on his painés rue. 266

Who could tell all aright, or full descrive
His woe, his plaint, his languor, and his pine?
Not all the men that have or been on live:
Thou, Reader, may'st thyself full well devine
That such a woe my wit can not define;
On idle[5] for to write it should I swink
When that my wit is weary it to think. 273

On heaven yet the starrés weren seen,
Although full pale iwoxen was the moon,

[1] Tene—sorrow. [2] Mete—dream. [3] Drie—endure. [4] Eft—again.
[5] On idle—in vain.

And whiten began the horízon sheen
All eastwardés, as it is wont to done,
And Phœbus with his rosy carté soon
'Gan after that to dress[1] him, up to fare,
When Troilus hath sent after Pandare. 280

This Pandare, that of all the day beforn
Ne might have comen[2] Troilus to see,
Although that he on his head it had sworn,
For with the King Priám all day was he,
So that it lay not in his liberty
No where to go, but on the morrow' he went
To Troilus, when that he for him sent; 287

For in his heart he couldé well devine
That Troilus all night for sorrow woke,
And that he wouldé tell him of his pine;
This knew he well enough withouten book;
For which to chamber straight the way he took,
And Troilus then soberly he gret,
And on the bed full soon he 'gan him set. 294

"My Pandarus! (quod Troilus) the sorrow
Which that I dric[3] I may not long endure;
I trow I shall not liven till to-morrow;
For which I would always on áventure,[4]
To thee devisen of my sepulture
The form, and of my meuble[5] thou dispone
Right as thee seemeth best is for to done: 301

"But of the fire and flambé funeral
In which my body brennen shall to glede,[6]
And of the feast and playés Palestral
At my vigíl I pray thee take good heed
That that be well, and offer Mars my steed,
My sword, mine helm, and, levé brother dear!
My shield to Pallas give, that shineth clear; 308

"The powder', in which my heart iburn'd, shall turn,
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urn,

[1] Dress—prepare to rise up. [2] Ne might have comen—was not able to come. [3] Drie—suffer. [4] On aventure—on the event of my death. [5] Meuble—goods, property. [6] Glede—flames.

V. 304. *Palestral.*] The gymnastic games exercised at the funeral of heroes. The reader is referred to a detailed account of the Pagan funereal solemnities to the sixth book of the Æneid.

V. 308. *My shield*, &c.] The meaning of this line is ambiguous. It should rather be,—

"To Pallas give my shield that shineth clear."

Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus piteously I sterve,[1]
So give it her, and do me this pleasánce
To pray her keep it for a remembrance: 315

"For well I feelen by my malady,
And by my dreamés now and yore ago,
All certainly that I must needés die;
The owl eke, which that hight[2] Ascalapho,
Hath after me shriek'd all these nightés two:
And god Mercúry, now of me woful wretch
The soulé guide, and when thee list, it fetch." 322

* * * * *

[Pandarus exerts his eloquence to calm the desperate mind of his friend. He bids him remember that he is a knight; that other worthy men have been separated from their lovers, and are so every day, even for ever; that many have been doomed to the grief of seeing themselves supplanted in love; that all his dreams are mere fantasies, and the result of his melancholy; and finally, that after all his sorrowing, in ten days his lady has promised to return to him; he therefore concludes:—]

"Rise, let us speak of lusty life in Troy
That we have led, and forth the timé drive,
And eke of timé coming us rejoie,
That bringen shall our blissé now so blive,[3]
And languor of these twicé dayés five
We shall therewith so forget or oppress,
That well unneth it doen shall us duress.[4] 329

"This town is full of lordés all about,
And truis[5] lasteth all this meané while;
Go we playen us in some lusty rout,
To Sarpedon, not hennés but a mile,
And thus thou shalt the timé well beguile,
And drive it forth unto that blissful morrow
That thou her see that cause is of thy sorrow. 336

[1] Sterve—die. [2] Hight—called. [3] Blive—quickly. [4] Do us duress—that it shall scarcely prove a hardship to us. [5] Truis—truce.

V. 319. *The owl eke*, &c.] Ascalaphus was appointed by Pluto to watch Proserpine in the Elysian fields, and frustrated her return with her mother, Ceres, by betraying the circumstance of her having eaten some pomegranates (the only obstacle to her release from the infernal regions). For his officious fidelity to his employer, Proserpine punished him by sprinkling water on his head, and changing him into an owl.

"Now rise, my dearé brother Troilus!
For certés it no honour is to thee
To weep, and in thy bed to rouken[1] thus,
For truely of one thing trust to me,
If thou thus lie a day, or two, or three,
The folk will ween that thou for cowardise
Thee feignest sick, and that thou dar'st not rise." 343

This Troilus answér'd; "O brother dear!
This knowen folk that have isuff'red pain,
That though he weep and make sorrówful cheer
That feeleth harm and smart in every vein
No wonder is; and though I ever plain
Or always weep, I am nothíng to blame,
Since I have lost the cause of all my game. 350

"But sithens of fine force[2] I must arise,
I shall arise as soon as e'er I may,
And God, to whom mine heart I sacrifice,
So send us hastily the tenneth day,
For was there never fowl so fain of May
As I shall be when she cométh in Troy
That cause is of my torment and my joy. 357

"But whither is thy rede,[3] (quod Troilus)
That we may play us best in all this town?"
"By God my counsel is (quod Pandarus)
To ride and play us with King Sárpedon."
So long of this they speaken up and down
Till Troilus 'gan at the last assent
To rise, and forth to Sarpedon they went. 364

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was all his live, and full of high prowess,
With all that might iservéd be on table
That dainty was, al' cost it[4] great richess,
He fed them day by day, that such nobless,
As saiden both the most and eke the least,
Was ne'er ere that day wist at any feast: 371

Nor in this world there is no instrument
Delicíous through wind or touch on cord,
As far as any wight hath e'er iwent,
That tongué tell or hearté may record,
But at that feast it was well heard accord;
Ne' of ladies eke so fair a company
On dance e'er then was never seen with eye. 378

[1] Rouken—keep close. [2] Fine force—very necessity. [3] Rede—counsel. [4] Al' cost it—although it cost.

But what availeth this to Troilus,
That for his sorrow nothing of it raught,[1]
But ever in one[2] his hearté piteous
Full busily Creseid' his lady sought?
On her was ever all that his heart thought,
Now this now that so fast imagining
That gladden iwis can him no feasting. 385

These ladies eke that at this feasté been,
Since that he saw his lady was away,
It was his sorrow on them for to seen,
Or for to hear on instrumentés play;
For she that of his heart beareth the key
Was absent, lo! this was his fantasy,
That no wight shouldé maken melody: 392

Nor there n'as[3] hour in all the day or night,
When he was there as no man might him hear,
That he ne said, "O lovesome lady bright!
How have ye faréd since that ye were there?
Welcome iwis, mine owné lady dear!"
But welaway! all this n'as but a mase;[4]
Fortune his love intended but to glase.[5] 399

The letters eke that she of oldé time
Had him isent he would alone iread
A hundred sithe[6] atwixen noon and prime,
Refiguring her shape and womanhead
Within his heart, and every word and deed
That passéd was; and thus he drove t' an end
The fourthé day, and thennés would he wend; 406

And saidé, "Levé[7] brother Pandarus!
Intendest thou that we shall here byleve[8]
Till Sarpedon will forth conveyen us?
Yet were it fairer that we took our leave;
For Goddés love let us now soon at eve
Our leavé take, and homeward let us turn,
For truély I will not thus sojóurn." 413

Pandare answeréd; "Be we comen hither
To fetchen fire and runnen home again?
God help me so I can not tellen whither
We mighten gone, if I shall sothly sain,
Where any wight is of us moré fain[9]
Than Sarpedon; and if we hennés hie
Thus suddenly I hold it villainy;[10] 420

[1] Raught—cared. [2] Ever in one—steadfastly, continually. [3] N'as—was not. [4] Mase—wild fancy. [5] Glase, (for glose)—to flatter. [6] Sithe—times. [7] Leve—dear. [8] Byleve—take up our stay. [9] Fain—pleased, glad. [10] Villainy—rudeness.

"Sith that we saiden we would byleve[1]
With him a week, and now thus suddenly
The fourthé day to take of him our leave,
He wouldé wond'ren on it truély :
Let us hold forth our purpose firmély,
And since that ye behighten[2] him t' abide
Hold forward now, and after let us ride." 427

This Pandarus with muchel pine and woe
Made him to dwell; and at the weekés end
Of Sarpedon they took their leave to go,
And on their way they speeden them to wend.
(Quod Troilus) "Now, Lord, me gracé send
That I may finden at my home-coming
Creseid' comen,"—and therewith 'gan he sing. 434

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When they unto the palace were icomen
Of Troilus, they down off horse alight,
And to the chamber their way have they nomen,[3]
And unto timé that it 'gan to night
They speaken of Creseid' the lady bright,
And after this, when that them bothé lest,[4]
They speed them from the supper unto rest. 441

On morrow' as soon as day began to clear
This Troilus 'gan of his sleep t' abraid,[5]
And to Pandárus his owné brother dear,
"For love of God, full piteously he said,
As go we see the palace of Creseid',
For since we yet may have no other feast,
So let us see her palace at the least!" 448

And therewithal his meiné for to blend[6]
Because he fond[7] into the town to go,
And to Creseida's palace they gone wend;
But Lord! this silly Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful hearté burst a-two,
For when he saw her doorés sparréd[8] all
Well nigh for sorrow' adown he 'gan to fall. 455

Therewith when he was 'ware, and 'gan behold
How shut was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his heart began to cold,
For which with changéd deadly palé face
Withouten word he forth-by 'gan to pace,

[1] Byleve—take up our stay. [2] Behighten—promised. [3] Nomen—taken. [4] Lest—pleased. [5] Abraid—break off, awake. [6] Meine to blend—to blind his attendants. [7] Fond—sought. [8] Sparred—barred.

And as God would he 'gan so fast to ride
That no wight of his countenance espied. 462

Then said he thus; "O palace desolate!
O house of houses whilome best ydight![1]
O palace empty and disconsolate!
O thou lantern, of which queint[2] is the light!
O palace whilome day, that now art night!
Well oughtest thou to fall and I to die,
Since she is gone that wont was us to gie.[3] 469

"O palace whilome crown of houses all!
Enluminéd with sun of allé bliss,
O ring, of which the ruby is out fall!
O cause of woe that cause hast been of bliss!
Yet since I may no bet, fain would I kiss
Thy coldé doorés, durst I for this rout;
And farewell shrine of which the saint is out!" 476

Therewith he cast on Pandarus his eye
With changéd face, and piteous to behold,
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode to Pandarus he told
His newé sorrow, and eke his joyés old
So piteously, and with so dead a hue,
That every wight might on his sorrow rue. 483

From thennés forth he rideth up and down,
And every thing came him to rémembrance
As he rode forth by places of the town
In which he whilome had all his pleasánce;
"Lo! yonder saw I mine own lady dance,
And in that temple with her eyen clear
Me captive caught first my right lady dear: 490

"And yonder have I heard full lustily
My dear heart Creseid' laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her onés eke full blissfully,
And yonder onés to me 'gan she say,
'Now, goodé sweet! loveth me well I pray;'
And yond so goodly 'gan she me behold
That to the death my heart is to her hold:[4] 497

"And at the corner in the yonder house
Heard I mine alderlevest[5] lady dear
So womanly with voice melodious
Singen so well, so goodly and so clear,
That in my soulé yet me think'th I hear

[1] Ydight—dressed. [2] Queint—quenched. [3] Gie—guide. [4] To her hold—held, bound. [5] Alderlevest—dearest above all.

The blissful sound, and in that yonder place
My lady first me took unto her grace." 504

* * * * *

And after this he to the gatés went
There as Creseid' out rode a full good pace,
And up and down there made he many' a went,[1]
And to himself full oft he said; "Alas!
From hennés rode my bliss and my soláce:
As wouldé blissful God now for his joy
I might her see again comén to Troy! 511

"And to the yonder hill I 'gan her guide,
Alas! and there I took of her my leave,
And yond' I saw her to her father ride,
For sorrow of which my hearté shall to-cleave,
And hither home I came when it was eve,
And here I dwell, out cast from allé joy,
And shall, till I may see her eft[2] in Troy." 518

And of himself imaginéd he oft
To be defaited,[3] pale, and waxen less
Than he was wont, and that men saiden soft,
"What may it be? who can the sothé[4] guess
Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?"
And all this n'as but his melángcholy,
That he had of himself such fantasy. 525

Another time imaginen he would
That evéry wight that went by the way
Had of him ruth, and that they sainé should,
"I am right sorry Troilus will dey:"[5]
And thus he drove a day yet forth or tway,[6]
As ye have heard; such life 'gan he to lead
As he that stood betwixen hope and drede:[7] 532

For which him likéd in his songés shew
Th' encheson[8] of his woe as he best might,
And made a song of wordés but a few,
Somewhat his woful hearté for to light,
And when he was from every mannés sight,
With softé voice he of his lady dear,
That absent was, 'gan sing as ye may hear: 539

"O star! of which I lost have all the light,
With hearté sore well ought I to bewail
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Towárd my death with wind I steer and sail,
For which the tenneth night if that I fail

[1] Went—turn. [2] Eft—after, again. [3] Defaited—wasted. [4] Sothe—truth. [5] Dey—die. [6] Tway--two. [7] Drede—doubt. [8] Encheson—cause.

The guiding of thy beamés bright an hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour." 546

This songé when he thus sungen had, soon
He fell again into his sighés old,
And every night, as was his wont to done,
He stoodé the bright mooné to behold,
And all his sorrow to the mooné told,
And said; "Iwis[1] when thou art hornéd new
I shall be glad, if all the world be true. 553

"I saw thine hornés old eke by that morrow
When hennés rode my bright lady dear,
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow,
For whiché, O bright Lúcina the clear!
For love of God run fast about thy sphere,
For when thine hornés new 'ginnen to spring,
Then shall she come that may my bliss ybring." 560

* * * * *

Upon the wallés fast eke would he walk,
And on the Greekés host he would ysee,
And to himself right thus he would ytalk;
"Lo! yonder is mine owné lady free,
Or ellés yonder there the tentés be,
And thence cometh this air that is so sote,[2]
That in my soul I feel it doth me bote.[3] 567

"And hardély[4] this wind that more and more
Thus stoundémele[5] encreaseth in my face
Is of my lady's deepé sighés sore;
I prove it thus, for in no other space
Of all this town, save only in this place,
Feel I no wind that soundeth so like pain,
It saith 'Alas! why twinnéd be we twain?'" 574

This longé time he driveth forth right thus,
Till full passéd was the ninthé night,
And aye beside him was this Pandarus,
That busily did allé his full might
Him to comfórt and make his hearté light,
Giving him hope alway the tenthé morrow
That she shall come and stinten all his sorrow. 581

Upon that other side eke was Creseid'
With women few among the Greekés strong,
For which full oft a-day, "Alas! she said,
That I was born! well may mine hearté long
After my death, for now live I too long;

[1] Iwis — surely. [2] Sote — sweet. [3] Doth me bote — heals me.
[4] Hardely—certainly. [5] Stoundemele—every instant.

Alas! and I ne may it not amend,
For now is worse than ever yet I wend. 588

"My father n'ill for nothing do me grace
To go again for aught I can him queme,[1]
And if so be that I my termé pace[2]
My Troilus, alas! shall in his heart deem
That I am false, and so it may well seem;
Thus shall I have unthank[3] on every side:—
That I was born so welaway[4] the tide! 595

"And if that I me put in jeopardy
To steal away by night, and it befall
That I be caught I shall be hold a spy,
Or ellés, lo! this dread I most of all,
If in the handés of some wretch I fall
I n'am but lost, al' be mine hearté true:
Now mighty God thou on my sorrow rue!" 602

Full pale iwaxen was her brighté face,
Her limbés lean, as she that all the day
Stood when she durst, and lookéd on the place
Where she was born, and she had dwelléd aye;
And all the night weeping, alas! she lay:
And thus despairéd out of allé cure
She led her life, this sorrowful creature. 609

Full oft a-day she sigh'd eke for distress,
And in herself she went aye pourtraying
Of Troilus the greaté worthiness,
And all his goodly wordés récording
Since first that day her love began to spring;
And thus she set her woful heart afire
Through rémembrance of that she 'gan desire. 616

* * * * *

Full ruefully she lookéd upon Troy,
Beheld the tow'rés high and eke the hallés;
"Alas! (quod she) the pleasance and the joy,
The which that now all turnéd into gall is,
Have I had often within yonder wallés!
O Troilus! what dost thou now? she said;
Lord, whether thou yet think upon Creseid'! 623

"Alas! that I n' had trowéd on your lore,[5]
And went with you, as ye me rede ere this,[6]
Then had I now not sighéd half so sore:

[1] Queme—please. [2] Terme pace—pass the time of my appointment. [3] Unthank—ill will. [4] Welaway the tide—alas the time. [5] Trowed on your lore—followed your advice. [6] Rede ere this—before counselled me.

Who might have said that I had done amiss
To steal away with such one as he is?
But all too late cometh the lectuary[1]
When men the corse unto the gravé carry. 630

* * * * *

"But nathéless, betide what may betide,
I shall to-morrow' at night, by east or west,
Out of this host steal on some manner side,[2]
And go with Troilus where as him lest;[3]
This purpose will I hold, and this is best;
No force[4] of wicked tongues a janglery,
For e'er on love have wretches had envý: 637

"For whoso will of every word take heed,
Or rulen him by every wightés wit,
Ne shall he never thriven out of drede,[5]
For that that some men blamen ever yet,
Lo other manner folk commenden it;
And as for me, for all such variance
Felicity clepe I my suffisance.[6] 644

"For which, withouten any wordés mo
To Troy I wol, as for conclusíon;"
But God it wote, ere fully monthés two
She was full far from that ententíon,
For bothé Troilus and Troié town
Shall knotéless[7] throughout her hearté slide,
For she woll take a purpose for to' abide. 651

This Diomed of whom I you tell 'gan,
Go'th now within himself aye arguing,
With all the sleight[8] and all that e'er he can,
How he may best with shortest tarrying
Into his net Creseida's hearté bring;
To this intent he couthé never fine;[9]
To fishen her he laid out hook and line. 658

But nathéless well in his heart he thought
That she was not without a love in Troy,
For never sithen[10] he her thennés brought,
Ne could he see her laugh or maken joy;
He n'ist[11] how best her heart for to accoy;[12]

[1] Lectuary — medicine. [2] On some manner side — one way or other. [3] Him lest — he pleases. [4] No force — no matter for the jangling of evil tongues. [5] Out of drede — out of doubt. [6] My suffisance—I account felicity to be my excuse, or satisfaction, for what I undertake. [7] Knoteless — knotless, without obstruction. [8] Sleight—cunning. [9] Never fine—he could never cease from this intention. [10] Sithen—since. [11] N'ist, ne wist—knew not. [12] Accoy —appease.

"But for t' essay, he said, naught it ne grieveth,[1]
For, He that naught essayeth naught achieveth." 665

Yet said he to himself upon a night,
"Now am I not a fool that wot well how
Her woe is for love of another wight,
And hereupon to go essay her now?
I may well wete it will not be my prow,[2]
For wisé folk in bookés it express,
'Men shall not woo a wight in heaviness.' 672

"But whoso might ywinnen such a flow'r
From him for whom she mourneth night and day,
He might well say he were a conqueror:"—
And right anon, as he that bold was aye,
Thought in his heart, "Happen what happen may,
Al' should I die, I will her hearté seech,[3]
I shall no moré losen but my speech." 679

This Diomed, as bookés us declare,
Was in his needés prest and courageous,[4]
With sterné voice, and mighty limbés square,
Hardy and testive,[5] strong and chivalrous,
Of deedés like his father Tydéus;
And some men say he was of tongué large,
And heir he was of Calydon and Arge. 686

Creseida mean[6] ywas of her statúre,
Thereto of shape, of face, and eke of cheer,
There mighten be no fairer creáture;
And often timés this was her mannere
To go itresséd[7] with her hairés clear
Down by her collar, at her back behind,
Which with a thread of gold she wouldé bind. 693

And, save her browés joineden ifere,[8]
There was no lack in aught I can espien;
But for to speaken of her eyen clear,
Lo! truély they written that her seyen,[9]
That paradise stood forméd in her eyen,
And with her riché beauty evermore
Strove love in her aye which of them was more. 700

She sober was, simple, and wise withal,
The best inourish'd[10] eké that might be,

[1] Ne grieveth—to make the trial will give no pain. [2] My prow—to my advantage. [3] Seech—seek. [4] Prest and courageous—quick, ready, and courageous in his enterprises. [5] Testive—headstrong. [6] Mean, Fr. *moyen* — middle. [7] Itressed — gathered in a lock. [8] Joineden ifere—except that her brows united, or joined together. [9] Seyen—saw. [10] Inourished—educated, brought up.

And goodly of her speech in general,
Charitable, estately, lusty',[1] and free,
Ne nevermore ne lackéd her pity,
Tender-hearted, and sliding of courage;[2]
But truely I cannot tell her age. 707

And Troilus well waxen was in height,
And cómplete, formed by proportión
So well, that Kind it naught amenden might,[3]
Young, fresh, and strong, and hardy as lion,
And true as steel in each conditión,
One of the best entetched[4] creature
That is or shall while that the world may dure. 714

And certainly in story it is found
That Troilus was never to no wight,
As in his time, in no degree secónd
In daring do,[5] that 'longeth to a knight;
Al'[6] might a giant passen him of might
His heart aye with the first and with the best
Stood peregal[7] to dare do what him lest.[8] 721

But for to tellen forth of Diomed,
It fell that after on the tenneth day
Since that Creseid' out of the city yede,[9]
This Diomed, as fresh as branch in May,
Came to the tenté there as Calchas lay,
And fainéd him with Calchas have to done,
But what he meant I shall you tellen soon. 728

Creseida, at short wordés for to tell,
Welcom'd him, and down him by her set,
As he was ethe enough[10] to maken dwell;
And after this, withouten longé let,[11]
The spices and the wine men forth them fet,[12]
And forth they speak of this and that ifere,[13]
As friendés do, of which some shall ye hear. 735

He 'gan first fallen of the war in speech
Betwixen them and the folk of Troy town,
And of th' assiege he 'gan eke her beseech
To tellen him what was her opinión;
From that demand he so descendeth down
To asken her if that her strangé thought[14]
The Greekés guise and workés that they wrought, 742

[1] Lusty — pleasant. [2] Sliding of courage — timid. [3] Amenden might—nature could not amend it. [4] Entetched — best endowed. [5] Daring (to) do. [6] Al'—although. [7] Peregal, Fr.—equal. [8] Lest—pleased. [9] Yede — departed. [10] Ethe enough — easy enough to detain. [11] Let — delay, hindrance. [12] Fet — fetched. [13] Ifere — together. [14] Strange thought—if that she thought the habits and works of the Greeks were strange to her.

And why her father tarrieth so long
To wedden her unto some worthy wight?
Creseidá, that was in her painés strong
For love of Troilus her owné knight,
So farforth as she conning[1] had or might,
Answer'd him then, but as of his intent
It seeméd that she ne wist what he meant. 749

But nathéless this ilké Diomed
'Gan on himself assure,[2] and thus he said;
"If I aright have taken on you heed,
Me thinketh thus, O lady mine Creseid'!
That since I first hand on your bridle laid,
When I out came of Troyé by the morrow,
Ne might I never see you but in sorrow. 756

"I can not say what may the causé be,
But if for love of some Troján it were,
The which right soré would athinken me,
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there
Shoulden ispill a quarter of a tear,
Or piteously your selven so beguile,
For dredéless[3] it is not worth the while. 763

"The folk of Troy, as who saith all and some,
In prison be, as ye your selven see,
From thennés shall not one on livé come
For all the gold atwixen sun and sea;
Trusteth well this, and understandeth me,
There shall not one to mercy go on live,
Al' were he lord of worldés twicé five. 770

"Such wreak[4] on them, for fetching of Heleine,
There shall be take, ere that we hennés wend,
That Manés, which that goddés be of Pain,
Shall be aghast that Greekés will them shend;[5]
And men shall dread unto the worldés end
From hennés forth to ravish any queen,
So cruel shall our wreak on them be seen. 777

"And, but if[6] Calchas lead us with *ambáges*,
That is to say, with double wordés sly,
Such as men clepen a word with two viságes,
Ye shall well knowen that I do not lie,
And all this thing right see it with your eye,
And that anon, ye will not trow[7] how soon;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done. 784

[1] Conning—wisdom. [2] On himself assure—to gain confidence. [3] Dredeless—doubtless. [4] Wreak—revenge. [5] Shend—destroy. [6] But if—unless. [7] Trow—believe.

"What! weenen ye that your wise father would
Have given Antenor for you anon,
If he ne wisté that the city should
Destroyéd be? Why, nay: so may I gone
He knew full well there shall not 'scapen one
That Trojan is, and for the greaté fear,
He durst not that ye dwelléd longer there. 791

"What will ye more, O lovesome lady dear!
Let Troy and Trojans from your hearté pace;
Drive out the bitter hope, and make good cheer,
And clepe[1] again the beauty of your face,
That ye with salté tearés so deface,
For Troy is brought in such a jeopardy
That it to save is now no remedy. 798

"And thinketh well ye shall in Greekés find
A love more perfect, ere that it be night,
Than any Trojan is, and moré kind,
And bet to serven you will do his might;
And if that ye vouchsafe, my lady bright!
I will be he to serven you my selve;
Yea, lever[2] than be lord of Greeces twelve." 805

And with that word he 'gan to waxen red,
And in his speech a little while he quoke,
And cast aside a little with his head,
And stint a while, and afterward he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his look,
And said, "I am, albeit to you no joy,
As gentle'[3] a man as any wight in Troy: 812

"For if my father Tydeus, he said,
Ilivéd had, then I had been ere this
Of Calidony' and Arge a king, Creseid',
And so hope I that I shall yet iwis,[4]
But he was slain, alas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebés all too rathe,[5]
Polynices and many' a man to scathe.[6] 819

"But hearté mine! sithe that I am your man,
And ye be the first of whom I 'seeché grace,
To serven you as heart'ly as I can,
And ever shall while I to live have space,
So that ere I depart out of this place
Ye will me granten that I may to-morrow
At better leisure tell you of my sorrow." 826

[1] Clepe—call. [2] Lever—rather. [3] Gentle—well born. [4] Iwis—indeed. [5] Rathe—early. [6] Scathe—injure.

What should I tell his wordés that he said?
He spake enough for one day at the mest;[1]
It proveth well he spake so that Creseid'
Granted on the morrow' at his request
Forthy[2] to speaken with him at the least,
So that he n'oldé[3] speaken of such mattere;
And thus she to him said, as ye may hear, 833

As she that had her heart on Troilus
So fast yset that none might it arace,[4]
And strangély she spake, and saidé thus:
"O Diomed! I love that ilké place
Where I was born, and Jovis of thy grace
Deliver' it soon of all that doth it care:
God, for thy might so leave it well to fare! 840

"That Greekés would their wrath on Troyé wreak,
If that they might, I know it well iwis;[5]
But it shall naught befallen as ye speak,
And God toforne;[6] and farther over this
I wot, my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me told,
So dear I am to him the more yhold. 847

"That Greekés be of high conditión
I wot eke well, but certain, men shall find
As worthy folké within Troyé town,
As conning,[7] as perfect, and eke as kind,
As be betwixen Orcades and Ind;
And that ye coulden well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thank[8] for to deserve. 854

"But as to speak of love, iwis, she said,
I had a lord to whom I wedded was,
The whose mine heart was all till that he died;
And other love, as help me now Pallas,
There in my heart ne is ne never was;
And that ye be of noble' and high kindred
I have well heard it tellen out of drede.[9] 861

"And that doth me to have so great a wonder
That ye will scornen any woman so;
Eke God wot love and I be far asunder;
I am disposed bet, so may I go,
Unto my death to plain and maken woe:
What I shall after do I cannot say,
But truély as yet me list not play. 868

[1] Mest — most. [2] Forthy — therefore. [3] N'olde — would not. [4] Arace, Fr. *aracher*—tear away. [5] Iwis—indeed. [6] God toforne—before God. [7] Conning — wise. [8] Thank — good will. [9] Out of drede—out of doubt.

"My heart is now in tribulatión,
And ye in armés busy day by day;
Hereafter, when ye wonnen have the town,
Paráventure then so it happen may
That when I see that I never ere saie,[1]
Then will I work that I never ere wrought;
This word to you enough sufficen ought. 875

"To-morrow eke will I speak with you fain,
So that ye touchen naught of this mattere,
And when you list ye may come here again;
And ere ye go, thus much I say you here,
As help me Pallas with her hairés clear,
If that I should of any Greek have ruth,
It should ybe your selven by my truth. 882

"I say not therefore that I will you love,
Ne say not nay, but, in conclusión,
I meané well, by God that sit above:"—
And therewithal she cast her eyen down,
And 'gan to sigh, and said, "O Troyé town!
Yet bid I God in quiet and in rest
I may thee see, or do my hearte brest."[2] 889

But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomed all freshly new again
'Gan pressen on, and fast her mercy pray;
And after this, the sothé[3] for to sain,
Her glove he took, of which he was full fain,[4]
And, finally, when it was waxen eve,
And all was well, he rose and took his leave. 896

The bright Venus followed and aye taught
The way where broadé Phœbus down alight,
And Cytherea her car-horse o'er raught
To whirl into the Lion if she might,
And Signifer[5] his candles showeth bright,
When that Creseidé unto her bed went
Within her father's fair brighté tent; 903

Returning in her soul aye up and down
The wordés of this sudden Diomed,
His great estate, and peril of the town,
And that she was alone, and haddé need
Of friendés help, and thus began to drede[6]
The causes why (the sothé for to tell),
That she took fully purpose for to dwell. 910

[1] Saie—saw. [2] Do my hearte brest—cause my heart to break, burst. [3] Sothe—truth. [4] Full fain—much pleased. [5] Signifer—the zodiac. [6] Drede—dread, fear.

The morrow came, and ghostly[1] for to speak,
This Diomed is come unto Creseid';
And, shortly, lest that ye my talé break,[2]
So well he for himselfen spake and said
That all her sighés sore adown he laid;
And, finally, the sothé[3] for to sain,
He reft her of the great[4] of all her pain. 917

And after this the story telleth us
That she unto him gave the fair bay steed
The which she onés won of Troilus,
And eke a brooch (and that was little need)
That Troilus' was, she gave this Diomed,
And eke the bet from sorrow' him to relieve,
She made him wear a pencell[5] of her sleeve. 924

I find eke in the story ellés where,
When through the body hurt was Diomed
Of Troilus, then wept she many' a tear
When that she saw his widé woundés bleed,
And that she took to keepen him good heed,
And for to heal him of his woundés smart:
Men say,—I n'ot,[6]—that she gave him her heart. 931

But truély the story telleth us
There maden never woman moré woe
Than she when that she falsed[7] Troilus;
She said; "Alas! for now is clean ago
My name in truth of love for evermo,
For I have falsed one the gentillest
That ever was, and one the worthiest. 938

"Alas! of me unto the worldés end
Shall neither be iwritten or isung
No good word, for these bookés will me shend;[8]
Irolléd shall I be on many' a tongue,
Throughout the world my bell shall be yrung,
And women most will haten me of all;—
Alas, that such a case[9] me should befall! 945

"They will say, in as much as in me is,
I have them done dishonour, welaway!
Al' be I not the first that did amiss,
What helpeth that to do my blame away?
But since I see there is no better way,

[1] Ghostly—spiritly, or, in the spirit of truth. [2] Tale break—break off my story. [3] Sothe—truth. [4] The great—he relieved her of the larger part of all her pain. [5] Pencell, Fr. *pennoncel*—a small streamer. [6] N'ot—know not. [7] Falsed—was false to. [8] Shend—ruin. [9] Case—fortune.

And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomed I will algate[1] be true. 952

"But Troilus, since I no better may,
And since that thus departen ye and I,
Yet pray I God so give you right good day,
As for the gentillest knight truély
That e'er I saw to serven faithfully,
And best can aye his lady's honour keep,"
(And with that word she burst anon to weep.) 959

"And certés you ne haten shall I never,
And friendés love that shall ye have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever;
And truély I would right sorry be
For to see you in adversity;
And guiltiless I wot well I you leave;
And all shall pass, and thus take I my leave." 966

But truély how long it was between
That she forsook him for this Diomed,
There is no author telleth it I ween,
Take every man now to his bookés heed,
He shall no termé finden out of drede,[2]
For though that he began to woo her soon,
Ere he her won yet was there more to done. 973

Ne me ne list this sely[3] woman chide,
Farther than that the story will devise;
Her name, alas! is published so wide,
That for her guilt it ought enough suffice;
And if I might excuse her in some wise,
For[4] she so sorry was for her untruth,
Iwis[5] I would excuse her yet for ruth. 980

This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus driveth forth as well as he hath might,
But often was his hearté hot and cold,
And namély that ilké nineth night
Which on the morrow she had him behight[6]
To come again; God wot full little rest
Had he that night; nothing to sleep him lest.[7] 987

The laurel-crowned Phœbus with his heat
'Gan in his course, aye upward as he went,
To warm of the east sea the wavés wet,
And Circés daughter sung with fresh intent,
When Troilus his Pandare after sent,

[1] Algate—nevertheless. [2] Out of drede—he will doubtless find no term, or precise time mentioned. [3] Sely—simple. [4] For—because. [5] Iwis—certainly. [6] Behight—promised. [7] Lest—desired.

And on the wallés of the town they plied,[1]
To look if they can see aught of Creseid'. 994

Till it was noon they stooden for to see
Who that there came; and every manner wight
That came from far they saiden it was she,
Till that they coulden knowen him aright:
Now was his hearté dull, now was it light;
And thus bejaped,[2] stooden for to stare
About naught this Troilus and Pandare. 1001

To Pandarus this Troilus then said;
"For aught I wot before noon sikerly[3]
Into this town ne cometh not Creseid',
She hath enough to doen hardily[4]
To twinnen[5] from her father, so trow I;
Her oldé father will yet make her dine
Ere that she go;—God give his hearté pine!"[6] 1008

Pandare answér'd; "It may well be certáin,
And forthy[7] let us dine, I thee beseech,
And after noon then may'st thou come again."
And home they go withouten moré speech,
And comen again; but long may they seech[8]
Ere that they finden that they after gape;
Fortune them both ythinketh for to jape.[9] 1015

(Quod Troilus) "I see well now that she
Is tarriéd with her old father so
That ere she come it will nigh even be.
Come forth, I will unto the gaté go;
These porters be unconning[10] evermo,
And I will do them holden up the gate
As naught ne were, although she comen late." 1022

The day go'th fast, and after that came eve,
And yet came not to Troilus Creseid':
He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,[11]
And far his head over the wall he laid,
And at the last he turnéd him, and said,
"By God I wot her meaning now, Pandare;
Almost iwis all new was all my care.[12] 1029

"Now doubtéless this lady can her good;[13]
I wot she cometh riding privily;
I cómmenden her wisdom by mine hood;

[1] Plied — haunted, sought diligently. [2] Bejaped — bemocked. [3] Sikerly—assuredly. [4] Hardily—certainly. [5] Twinnen—separate. [6] Pine—sorrow. [7] Forthy—therefore. [8] Seech—seek. [9] Jape—laugh at. [10] Unconning—ignorant. [11] Greve—grove. [12] All my care—my care was indeed almost all afresh. [13] Can her good—knows her advantage.

She will not maken people nicély [1]
Gare on her when she cometh, but softély
By night into the town she thinketh ride :—
And, dear brother! think not long t' abide. 1036

"We have naught ellés for to do iwis; [2]
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen [3] me,
Have here my truth I see her: yond' she is:
Heave up thine eyen man; may'st thou not see?"
Pandare answeréd, "Nay, so may I the; [4]
All wrong by God: what say'st thou man, where art?
That I see yond' afar is but a cart." 1043

"Alas! thou sayest right soth,[5] (quod Troilus)
But hardily [6] it is not all for naught
That in mine heart I now rejoicé thus;
It is against some good: I have a thought,
Know I not how, but since that I was wrought
Ne felt I such a comfort dare I say :—
She cometh to-night,—my life that durst I lay." 1050

Pandare answér'd; "It may be well enough;"
And held with him of all that e'er he said,
But in his heart he thought, and soft he lough,[7]
And to himself full soberly he said,
"From Haselwood, where Jolly Robin ply'd,
Shall come all that that thou abidest here;
Yea, farewell all the snow of forné year." [8] 1057

The warden of the gatés 'gan to call
The folk which that without the gatés were,
And bad them driven in their beastés all,
Or all the night they must byleven [9] there;
And far within the night, with many' a tear,
This Troilus 'gan homeward for to ride,
For well he seeth it helpeth not t' abide. 1064

But nathéless he gladded him in this,
He thought he misaccounted had his day,
And said; "I understood have all amiss,

[1] Nicely gare — curiously stare. [2] Iwis — indeed. [3] Trowen — believe. [4] The—thrive. [5] Soth—true. [6] Hardily—truly. [7] Lough —laughed. [8] Forne year—last year. [9] Byleven—remain.

V. 1049. *Such comfort dare I say.*] It is not improbable that Shakspeare may have had our poet in his mind when he wrote the well-known soliloquy of Romeo, during his exile :—

"My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne;
And all the day an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts."

For thilké night I last Creséida saie[1]
She said; 'I shall be here, if that I may,
Ere that the moon, O my dear hearté sweet!
The Lion pass out of this Ariete:' 1071

"For which she may yet hold all her behest:"[2]
And on the morrow to the gate he went,
And up and down, by west and eke by east,
Upon the wallés made he many' a went;[3]
But all for naught; his hope alway him blent,[4]
For which at night in sorrow and sighés sore
He went him home withouten any more. 1078

This hope all clean out of his hearté fled,
He ne' hath whereon now longer for to hong,
But for the pain him thought his hearté bled,
So were his throwés sharp, and wonder strong;
For when he saw that she abode so long
He ne wist what he judgen of it might,
Since she hath broken that she him behight.[5] 1085

The third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth day
After those dayés ten of which I told,
Betwixen hope and dread his hearté lay,
Yet somewhat trusting on her hestés[6] old;
But when he saw she n'olde her termés[7] hold,
He can now see no other remedy
But for to shapen him soon for to die. 1092

Therewith the wicked spirit, (God us bless!)
Which that men clepen the wood[8] Jealousy,
'Gan in him creep in all this heaviness,
For which, because he woulden sooné die,
He ne' eat ne drank for his melángcholy,
And eke from every company he fled;
This was the life that all this time he led. 1099

He so defaite[9] was that no manner man
Unnethés[10] him might knowen where he went,
So was he lean and thereto pale and wan,
And feeble, that he walketh by potent,
And with his ire he thus himselfen shent;[11]
But whoso asked him whereof him smart,
He said his harm was all about his heart. 1106

Priam full oft, and eke his mother dear,
His brethren and his sistren, 'gan him frain[12]
Why he so woful was in all his cheer,

[1] Saie — saw. [2] Behest — promise. [3] Went — turn. [4] Blent — blinded. [5] Behight — promised. [6] Hestes — behests, promises. [7] Termes — stipulations. [8] Wood — mad. [9] Defaite — fallen away. [10] Unnethes — scarcely. [11] Shent — injured, ruined. [12] Frain — question.

And what thing was the cause of all his pain?
But all for naught; he n'olde his causé plain,
But said he felt a grievous malady
About his heart, and fain he wouldé die. 1113

So on a day he lay him down to sleep,
And so befell it that in sleep him thought
That in a forest fast he walk'd to weep
For love of her that him those painés wrought,
And up and down as he that forest sought,
He met[1] he saw a boar with tuskés great
That slept against the bright sunnés heat; 1120

And by this boar, fast in her armés fold,
Lay kissing aye his lady bright Creseid',
For sorrow' of which, when he it 'gan behold,
And for despite, out of his sleep he braid,[2]
And loud he cried on Pandarus, and said,
"O Pandarus! now know I crop and root;[3]
I am but dead; there is none other boot.[4] 1127

"My lady bright, Creseid', hath me betray'd,
In whom I trusted most of any wight;
She elléswhere hath now her heart apaid;[5]
The blissful goddés thorough their great might
Have in my dream ishowéd it full right:
Thus in my dream Creseid' have I behold;"
And all this thing to Pandarus he told. 1134

"O my Creseid'! alas! what subtlety,
What newé lust, what beauty, what science,
What wrath of just cause have ye unto me?
What guilt of me, what fell experience,
Hath from me reft, alas! thine ádvertence?[6]
O trust! O faith! (quod he), O deep assurance!
Who hath me reft Creseid', all my pleasance? 1141

"Alas! why let I her from hennés go?
For which well nigh out of my wit I braid;[2]
Who shall now trow on any oathés mo?
God wot I ween'd, O lady bright Creseid'!
That every word was gospel that ye said:
But who may bet beguile, if that him list,
Than he on whom men weenen best to trist? 1148

"What shall I do, my Pandarus? alas!
I feelen now so sharp a newé pain,
Since that there is no remed' in this case,

[1] Met—dreamed. [2] Braid—started. [3] Crop and root—root and branch. [4] Boot—remedy. [5] Apaid—bestowed. [6] Advertence—attention.

That bet were it I with mine handés twain
My selven slew than alway thus to plain,
For through the death my woe should have an end,
Where every day with life myself I shend. 1155

* * * * *

[Pandarus endeavours to explain favourably the dream, by suggesting that the boar may be her old father; and concludes by recommending him to write her a letter, as this will decide whether she cannot, or is unwilling to come.]

THE COPY OF THE LETTER.

"Right fresh flow'r, whose I've aye been and shall
Withouten part of elléswhere servíce,
With heart and body, life, lust, thought, and all,
I, woful wight, in every humble wise
That tongue can tell or hearté may devise,
As oft as matter occupieth place,
Me recommend unto your noble grace. 1162

"Liketh it you to weeten,[1] sweeté heart!
As ye well knowen, how long time agone
That ye me left in asper[2] painés smart,
When that ye wenten, of which yet boot[3] none
Have I none had, but ever worse begone
From day to day am I, and so must dwell
While it you list, of weal and woe my well.[4] 1169

"For which to you with dreadful hearté true
I write, as he that sorrow driveth to write,
My woe, that every hour encreaseth new,
Complaining as I dare or can indite;
And that defacéd is that may ye wite[5]
The tearés which that from mine eyen rain,
That woulden speak if that they durst, and plain. 1176

"You first beseech I, that your eyen clear
To look on this defouléd ye not hold,
And o'er all this that ye my lady dear
Will vouchsafen this letter to behold,
And by the cause eke of my carés cold,
That slay'th my wit, if aught amiss me start,
Forgiveth it me, mine own sweeté heart! 1183

"If any servant durst or ought of right
Upon his lady piteously complain,
Then ween I that I ought to be that wight,
Consider'd this, that ye these monthés twain
Have tarried where ye saiden, soth to sain,

[1] Weeten—know. [2] Asper—sharp, rough. [3] Boot—relief. [4] Well—spring. [5] Wite—know.

But tenné days ye would in host sojóurn,
But in two monthés yet ye not return. 1190

"But for as much as me must needés like
All that you list, I dare not 'plainen more,
But humbly with sorrówful sighés sick,
You write I mine unresty sorrows sore,
From day to day desiring evermore
To knowen fully, if your will it were,
How ye have far'd and done while ye be there; 1197

"The whose welfare and heal eke God encrease
In honour such, that upward in degree
It grow always, so that it never cease;
Right as your heart aye can, my lady free,[1]
Devise, I pray to God so may it be,
And grant it that ye soon upon me rue,
As wisely[2] as in all I'm to you true. 1204

"And if you liketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whose woe there may no wight descrive,
I can no more, but chest[3] of every care,
At writing of this letter I'm on live,
All ready out my woful ghost to drive,
Which I delay and hold him yet in hond[4]
Upon the sight of matter of your sond.[5] 1211

"Mine eyen two, in vain with which I see,
Of sorrowful tearés salt are waxen wellés;
My song in plaint of mine adversity,
My good in harm, mine ease eke waxen hell is,
My joy in woe: I can say now naught ellés
But turnéd is, for which my life I wary,[6]
Evéry joy or ease in his contráry: 1218

"Which with your coming home again to Troy
Ye may redress, and more a thousand sith,[7]
Than e'er I had encreasen in me joy;
For was there never hearté yet so blith
To have his life as I shall be, as swith[8]
As I you see, and though no manner ruth
Can moven you,—yet thinketh on your truth. 1225

"And if so be my guilt hath death deservéd,
Or if you list no more upon me see,
In guerdon[9] yet of that I have you servéd
Beseech I you, mine owné lady free,[1]
That hereupon you woulden write to me

[1] Free — bountiful. [2] Wisely — surely. [3] Chest — receptacle. [4] Hold in hond—keep in suspense. [5] Sond—mind, consideration. [6] Wary—consume. [7] Sith—times. [8] Swith—soon. [9] Guerdon—reward.

For love of Jovis, my right lodé-star,
That death may make an end of all my war. 1232

"If other cause aught doth you for to dwell,
That with your letter ye me recomfórt,
For though to me your absence is a hell,
With patiénce I will my woe comfórt,
And with your letter' of hope I will disport:
Now writeth, sweet! and let me thus not 'plain;
With hope or death delivereth me from pain. 1239

"Iwis,[1] mine owné dearé hearté true!
I wot that when ye next upon me see,
So lost have I my heal and eke my hue,
Creseidé shall not conne[2] then knowen me;
Iwis,[1] mine heartés day, my lady free!
So thirsteth aye mine hearté to behold
Your beauty, that unneth[3] my life I hold. 1246

"I say no more, al' have I for to say
To you well more than that I tellen may;[4]
But whether that you do me live or dey,
Yet pray I God so give you right good day:
And fareth well, thou goodly fair freshé May!
As ye that life or death me may command,
And to your truth aye I me recommand, 1253

"With healé such, that but ye given me
The samé heal I shall no heal yhave:
In you lieth, when you list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shall my grave,
And in you my life, in you might to save
Me from disease of all my painés smart:
And fare now well, my own dear sweeté heart! 1260
"*Le vostre, T.*"

This letter forth was sent unto Creseid',
Of which her answer in effect was this:
Full piteously she wrote again, and said,
That all so sooné as she might iwis[5]
She would come, and amend that was amiss;
And, finally, she wrote and sayéd then
She would ycome, yea, but she n'ist[6] not when. 1267

But in her letter maden she such feastés
That wonder was, and swore she lov'd him best,
Of which he found but bottomless behestés.[7]

[1] Iwis—indeed. [2] Conne—be able. [3] Unneth—scarcely. [4] Tellen may—although I have more to say than I can tell. [5] Iwis—certainly. [6] N'ist, ne wist—knew not. [7] Behestes—promises.

But, Troilus, thou may'st now east and west
Pipe in an ivy leaf if that thee lest :[1]
Thus go'th the world;—God shield us from mischance,
And every wight that meaneth truth advance! 1274

Encreasen 'gan the woe from day to night
Of Troilus for tarrying of Creseid',
And lessen 'gan his hope and eke his might,
For which all down he in his bed him laid;
He ne ate, drank, ne slept, ne wordé said,
Imagining aye that she was unkind,
For which well nigh he wax'd out of his mind. 1281

This dream, of which I told have eke beforn,
May never come out of his remembránce;
He thought aye well he had his lady lorn,[2]
And that Jovis of his high purveyance[3]
Him showéd had in sleep the signifiance
Of her untruth and his disáventure,
And that the boar was shown him in figúre; 1288

For which he for Sibyl his sister sent,
That calléd was Cassandr' eke all about,
And all his dream he told her ere he stent,[4]
And her besought assoilen[5] him the doubt
Of the strong boar with all his tuskés stout;
And, finally, within a little stound[6]
Cassandra him 'gan thus his dream expound. 1295

* * * * *

"This ilké boar betokeneth Diomed,
Tydeus' son, that down descended is
From Mele'ager, that made the boar to bleed,
And thy lady, where so she be iwis,[7]
This Diomed her heart hath and she his:
Weep if thou wilt or leave, for out of doubt
This Diomed is in and thou art out." 1302

* * * * *

[According to custom Cassandra is disbelieved, and Troilus sends her away in wrath.]

Cassandra goeth; and he with cruel heart
Forgot his woe for anger of her speech,
And from his bed all suddenly he start,

[1] Lest — choose. [2] Lorn — lost. [3] Purveyance — providence. [4] Stent — ceased. [5] Assoilen—answer. [6] Stound—time. [7] Iwis—in truth.

As though all whole him had imade a leche,[1]
And day by day he 'gan enquire and seech
A soth[2] of this with all his busy cure; [3]
And thus he driveth forth his áventure. 1309

* * * * *

But nathéless though he 'gan him despair,
And dread aye that his lady was untrue,
Yet aye on her his hearté 'gan repair,
And, as these lovers do, he sought aye new
To get again Creseida bright of hue,
And in his heart he went her excusing,
That Calchas causéd all her tarrying. 1316

And often time he was in purpose great
Him selven like a pilgrim to disguise
To see her; but he may not counterfeit
To be unknown of folk that weren wise,
Ne find excuse aright that may suffice,
If he among the Greekés knowen were,
For which he wept full often many' a tear. 1323

To her he wrote yet often time all new
Full piteously, he left it not for sloth,
Beseeching her, sithens[4] that he was true,
That she would come again and hold her truth:
For which Creseid' upon a day for ruth,
(I take it so) touching all this mattere
Wrote him again, and said as ye may hear:— 1330

"Cupidés son, ensample' of goodlihead,[5]
O sword of knighthood, source of gentleness!
How might a wight in torment and in drede,[6]
And healless,[7] you senden as yet gladness?
I heartiless, I sick, I in distress,
Since ye with me nor I with you may deal,
You neither send I may ne heart ne heal. 1337

"Your letters full the paper all iplainted[8]
Commovéd haven my heartés pity;
I have eke seen with tearés all depainted
Your letter, and how ye requiren me
To come again, which yet ne may not be,
But why, lest that this letter founden were,
No mentión ne make I now for fear. 1344

[1] Leche—physician. [2] Soth—truth. [3] Cure—care. [4] Sithens—since. [5] Goodlihead—goodness. [6] Drede—doubt. [7] Healless—helpless. [8] Iplainted—complaining.

"Grievous to me (God wot) is your unrest,
Your haste, and that the goddés ordinance
It seemeth not ye take it for the best,
Nor other thing is in your remembrance,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasánce;
But be not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tarry' is all for wicked speech: 1351

"For I have heard well moré than I ween'd
Touching us two, how thingés have istand,
Which I shall with dissimuling amend;
And be not wroth, I have eke understand
How ye ne do but holden me in hand;[1]
But now no force;[2] I cannot in you guess
But allé truth and allé gentleness. 1358

"Comen I will, but yet in such disjoint
I stand as now, that what year or what day
That this shall be, that can I not appoint;
But in effect I pray you as I may
Of your good word and of your friendship aye,
For truély while that my life may dure
As for a friend ye may in me assure. 1365

"Yet pray I you on evil ye ne take[3]
That it is short which that I to you write;
I dare not where I am well letters make,
Ne never yet ne could I well indite;
Eke great effect men writen in placé lite;[4]
Th' intent is all, and not the letters' space:
And fareth well; God have you in his grace! 1372
"*Le vostre, C.*"

This Troilus thought this letter all strange
When he it saw, and sorrowfully' he sight;[5]
Him thought it like a kalends of exchange;
But, finally, he full ne trowen might[6]
That she ne would him holden that she hight;
For with full evil will list him to leave
That loveth well, in such case, though him grieve. 1379

But nathéless men say that at the last,
For any thing men shall the sothé[7] see,
And such a case betide, and that as fast,
That Troilus well understood that she
Was not so kind as that her ought to be;

[1] Holden in hand—hold slightly, ready to let slip at pleasure. [2] No force—no matter. [3] Evil ne take—take not amiss. [4] Place lite—small space. [5] Sight—sighed. [6] Ne trowen might—he could not fully believe but she would hold her promise. [7] Sothe—truth.

And, finally, he wot now out of doubt
That all is lost that he hath been about. 1386

Stood on a day in his melángcholy
This Troilus, and in suspectión
Of her for whom he weenéd for to die,
And so befell that throughout Troyé town,
As was the guise,[1] iborne was up and down
A manner coat armóur, as saith the story,
Before Deiphobe, in sign of his victóry; 1393

The whiché coat, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphobe it had yrent from Diomed
The samé day; and when this Troilus
It saw he 'gan to taken of it heed,
Avising of the length and of the brede,[2]
And all the work, but as he 'gan behold,
Full suddenly his heart began to cold, 1400

As he that on the collar found within
A brooch that he Creseida gave at morrow
That she from Troyé town must needés twin,[3]
In rémembrance of him and of his sorrow,
And she him laid again her faith to borrow[4]
To keep it aye; but now full well he wist
His lady was no longer on to trist. 1407

He goeth him home, and 'gan full sooné send
For Pandarus, and all this newé chance
And of this brooch he told him orde and end,
Complaining of her heartés variance,
His longé love, his truth, and his penánce;
And after Death, withouten wordés more,
Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore. 1414

Then spake he thus; "O lady mine, Creseid'!
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?[5]
Where is your love? where is your truth? he said;
Of Diomed have ye now all this feast?
Alas! I would have trowéd[6] at the least
That since ye n'old in truthé to me stand,
That ye thus n'old have holden me in hand.[7] 1421

"Who shall now trowen[8] on any oathés mo?
Alas! I never would have ween'd ere this
That ye, Creseida, could have changéd so,

[1] Guise—custom. [2] Brede—breadth. [3] Twin—depart. [4] Faith to borrow—pledged her faith. [5] Behest—promise. [6] Trowed—believed. [7] Holden in hand—that ye would have held me thus lightly. [8] Trowen—believe.

Ne but I had aguilt[1] and done amiss:
So cruel ween'd I not your heart iwis
To slay me thus; alas! your name of truth
Is now fordone, and that is all my ruth. 1428

"Was there none other brooch you list to let
To feffé[2] with your newé love, (quod he)
But thilké brooch that I with tearés wet
You gave as for a rémembrance of me?—
None other cause, alas! ne hadden ye
But for despite, and eke for that ye meant
All utterly to showen your intent: 1435

"Through which I see that clean out of your mind
Ye have me cast, and I ne can nor may
For all this world within mine hearté find
To' unloven you a quarter of a day.—
In cursed time I born was, welaway!
That you that done me all this woe endure,
Yet love I best of any creáture. 1442

"Now God (quod he) me senden yet the grace
That I may meeten with this Diomed,
And truély if I have might and space,
Yet shall I make I hope, his sidés bleed:
Now God (quod he) that oughtest taken heed
To furthren truth, and wrongés to puníce,
Why n'ilt thou do a vengeance of this vice? 1449

"O Pandarus! that in dreamés for to trist
Me blaméd hast, and wont art oft upbraid,
Now may'st thou see thyself, if that thee list,
How true is now thy niecé, bright Creseid':—
In sundry formés, (God it wot) he said,
The goddés showen bothé joy and teen[3]
In sleep, and by my dream it is now seen. 1456

"And certainly, withouten moré speech,
From hennés forth, as farforth as I may,
Mine owné death in armés will I seech,
I ne recké not how sooné be the day;
But truély, Creseida, sweeté May!
Whom I have aye with all my might iservéd,
That ye thus done I have it not deservéd." 1463

This Pandarus, that all these thingés heard,
And wist well that he said a soth[4] of this,
He not a word again to him answér'd
For sorry of his friendés sorrow' he is,
And shaméd for his niece hath done amiss,

[1] Ne but I had aguilt—even had I been guilty. [2] Feffe (from *fief*,) —present. [3] Teen—sorrow. [4] Soth—truth.

And stant astonied of these causes twáy
And still as stone; one word ne could he say. 1470

But at the last thus he yspake and said:
"My brother dear! I may do thee no more;
What should I say? I hate iwis[1] Creseid',
And God it wot I will hate her e'er-more;
And that thou me besoughtest do of yore,
Having unto mine honour ne my rest
Right no regard, I did all that thee lest.[2] 1477

"If I did aught which that might liken thee
It is me lefe,[3] and of this treason now
God wot that it a sorrow is to me,
And dredéless,[4] for heartés ease of you,
Right fain I would amend it wist I how;—
And from this world Almighty God I pray,
Deliver her soon! I can no moré say." 1484

Great was the woe and plaint of Troilus,
But forth her course Fortúne aye 'gan to hold,
Creseid' loveth the son of Tydeus,
And Troilus must weep in carés cold:
Such is this world, who so it can behold;
In each estate is little heartés rest;
God lené us[5] to take it for the best! 1491

In many cruel battle, out of drede,
Of Troilus this ilké noble knight
(As men may in these oldé bookés read)
Was seen his knighthood and his greaté might,
And dredéless his iré day and night
Full cruelly the Greekés aye abought,
And alway most this Diomed he sought. 1498

And often times I findé that they met
With bloody strokés and with wordés great,
Essaying how their spearés weren whet;[6]
And God it wot with many' a cruel heat
'Gan Troilus upon his helm to beat:
But nathéless Fortúne it naught ne would
Of either's hand that either dyen should. 1505

* * * * *

The wrath, as I began you for to say,
Of Troilus the Greekés boughten dear,
For thousandés his handés maden dey,
As he that was withouten any peer,
Save in his time Hectór, as I can hear;

[1] Iwis—of a truth. [2] Lest—wished. [3] Me lefe—it is a joy to me. Dredeless—doubtless. [5] Lene—grant. [6] Whet—(for) whetted.

But welaway! (save only Goddés will)
Despiteously him slew the fierce Achil. 1512

And when that he was slain in this mannere
His lighté ghost full blissfully is went
Up to th' hollowness of the seventh sphere,
In his place letting evereach element,
And there he saw, with full avisément,[1]
The erratic starrés, hearkening harmony,
With soundés full of heaven's melody. 1519

And down from thennés fast he 'gan avise
This little spot of earth that with the sea
Embracéd is, and fully 'gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanity
In réspect of the plain felicity
That is in heaven above, and at the last
Where he was slain his looking down he cast. 1526

And in himself he laugh right at the woe
Of them that wepten for his death so fast,
And damnéd all our works, that followeth so
The blindé lust[2] which that ne may not last,
And shoulden all our heart on heaven cast;
And forthe he went, shortly for to tell,
Where as Mercúry sorted him to dwell. 1533

Such fine[3] hath, lo! this Troilus for love,
Such fine hath all his greaté worthiness,
Such fine hath his estate royal above,
Such fine his lust,[2] such fine hath his nobless,
Such fine hath this false worldés brittleness!
And thus began his loving of Creseid'
As I have told, and in this wise he died. 1540

O young and freshé folkés, he or she!
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repaireth home from worldly vanity,
And of your hearts up casteth the viságe
To thilké God that after his imáge
You made, and thinketh all n'is but a fair,
This world that passeth soon, as flow'rés fair. 1547

Go, little book, go little tragedy,
Where God my maker yet ere that I die
So send me might to make some comedy;
But, little book, make thou thee none envý,
But subject be unto all poesie,
And kiss the steppés where as thou seest pace
Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace. 1554

[1] Avisement—inspection. [2] Lust—pleasure. [3] Fine—conclusion.

And, for[1] there is so great diversity
In English, and in writing of our tongue,
So pray I God that none miswrité thee,
Ne thee miss-metre for default of tongue;
And read where so thou be, or ellés sung,
That thou be understood, God I beseech;
But yet to purpose of my rather[2] speech. 1561

[1] For—because. [2] Rather—former.

"In time of truce on hawking would he ride,
* * * * *
And when that he came riding into town,
Full oft his lady from her window down,
As fresh as falcon comen out of mew,
Full ready was him goodly to salue."—B. iii. l. 1299.

THE

LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

THE LEGEND OF

THISBE OF BABYLON.

At Babyloné whilom fell it thus,
The whiché town the Queen Semiramus
Let ditchen all about, and wallés make
Full high of hardy tilés well ibake :
There weren dwelling in this noble town 5
Two lordés which that were of great renown,
And woneden[1] so nigh upon a green
That there n'as but a stone wall them between,
As often in great townés is the wonne,[2]
And, soth to say, that one man had a son 10
Of all that land one of the lustiest,[3]
That other had a daughter the fairest
That eastward in the world was then dwelling ;
The name of evereach 'gan to other spring,
By women that were neighbourés about ; 15
For in that country yet, withouten doubt,
Maidenés been ikept for jealousy
Full straitly, lest they didden some folly.
This youngé man was cleped Pyramus,
And Thisbe hight the maid (Naso saith thus) 20

[1] Woneden—lived. [2] Wonne—custom. [3] Lustiest—most agreeable.

Legend of Good Women.] The ladies of the court having taken offence against our Poet, in consequence of his misprision of gallantry in commemorating the untruth of the gentle sex, at the instigation of the Queen, he made *amende honorable* by writing the "Legend of Good Women."

And thus by réport was their name ishove,[1]
That as they wax'd in age so wax'd their love;
And certain, as by reason of their age,
There might have been betwixt them marriáge,
But that their fathers would it not assent; 25
And they in love ylike sore bothé brent[2]
That none of all their friendés might it let;[3]
But privily sometimés yet they met
By sleight,[4] and spaken some of their desire:
As, wrie the glede[5] and hotter is the fire;— 30
Forbid a love and 'tis ten times so wood.[6]
This wall which that betwixt them both ystood
Was clov'n a-two right from the top adown
Of oldé time of his foundatión,
But yet this clifté was so narrow and lite[7] 35
It was not seené, (dear enough a mite)
But what is that that love cannot espy?
Ye lovers two, if that I shall not lie,
Ye founden first this little narrow clift,
And with a sound as soft as any shrift[8] 40
They let their wordés through the clifté pace,[9]
And tolden, while that they stooden in the place,
All their complaint of love and all their woe,
At every timé when they dursten so.
Upon that one side of the wall stood he, 45
And on that other sidé stood Thisbe,
The sweeté sound of other to receive,
And thus their wardens woulden they deceive,
And every day this wall they woulden threat,
And wish to God that it were down ibeat; 50
Thus would they say, "Alas! thou wicked wall,
Thorough thine envy thou us lettest[3] all;
Why n'ilt[10] thou cleave or fallen all a-two?
Or at the leasté, but thou wouldest so,
Yet wouldest thou but onés let us meet, 55
Or onés that we mighten kissen sweet,
Then were we curéd of our carés cold;
But nathéless yet be we to thee hold,[11]
In as much as thou suff'rest for to gone
Our wordés through thy lime and eke thy stone, 60
Yet oughten we with thee be well apaid.[12]
And when these idle wordés weren said,
The coldé wall they woulden kiss of stone,
And take their leave, and forth they woulden gone,

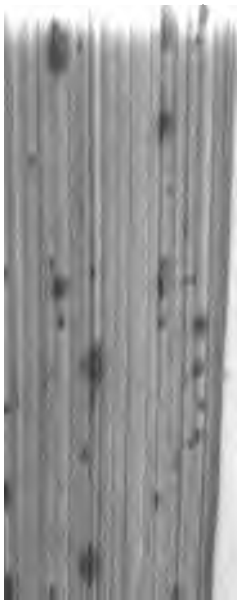
[1] Ishove—extended. [2] Brent—burned. [3] Let—prevent. [4] Sleight—cunning. [5] Wrie the glede—cover the flame. [6] Wood—wild. [7] Lite—small. [8] Shrift—confession. [9] Pace—pass. [10] N'ilt—wilt not. [11] Hold—beholden. [12] Apaid—satisfied.

And this was gladly in the eventide, 65
Or wonder early, lest men it espied:
And longé time they wrought in this mannére,
Till on a day, when Phœbus 'gan to clear,
Aurora with the streamés of her heat
Had dryéd up the dew of herbés wet, 70
Unto this clift, as it was wont to be,
Came Pyramus, and after came Thisbe,
And plighten truth right fully in their faie,[1]
That ilké samé night to steal away,
And to beguile their wardens evereachone, 75
And forth out of the city for to gone.
And, for[2] the fieldés been so broad and wide,
For to meet in one place at one tide[3]
They setten marks there[4] meetingés should be,
Where King Ninus was graven[5] under a tree, 80
For oldé Paynims,[6] that idollés heried,[7]
Useden then in fieldés to be buried;
And fasté by his gravé was a well;
And shortély of this talé for to tell,
This cov'nant was affirmed wonder fast, 85
And long them thoughten that the sunné last,
That it n'ere gone under the sea adown.
This Thisbe hath so great affectión,
And so great liking Pyramus to see,
That when she saw her timé might ybe, 90
At night she stole away full privily,
With her face ywimpled[8] full subtilly,
For all her friendés (for to save her truth)
She hath forsak'n', alas! and that is ruth,
That ever woman would ybe so true 95
To trusten man but she the bet him knew;
And to the tree she go'th a full good pace,
For love made her so hardy in this case,
And by the well adown she 'gan her dress.[9]
Alas! then cometh a wild lioness 100
Out of the wood, withouten more arest,[10]
With bloody mouth of strangling of a beast,
To drinken of the well there[4] as she sat;
And when that Thisbe had espiéd that,
She rist her up with a full dreary heart, 105
And in a cave with dreadful[11] foot she start;
For by the moon she saw it well withal,
And as she ran her wimple[12] let she fall,

[1] Faie—faith. [2] For—because. [3] Tide—time. [4] There—where. [5] Graven—buried. [6] Paynims—pagans. [7] Heried—worshipped. [8] Ywimpled—veiled. [9] Dress—seat herself. [10] Arest—delay. [11] Dreadful—fearful. [12] Wimple—neckerchief.

And took no heed, so sore she was awapéd,[1]
And eke so glad for that she was escapéd; 110
And thus she sat and lurketh wonder still.
When that this lioness hath drunk her fill,
Abouten the well 'gan she for to wind,
And right anon the wimple 'gan she find,
And with her bloody mouth it all to-rent; 115
When this was done no longer she ne stent,
But to the wood her way then hath she nome.[2]
And at the last this Pyramus is come :—
But all too long, alas! at home was he;
The mooné shone, men mighten well isee; 120
And in his way, as that he came full fast,
His eyen to the ground adown he cast,
And in the sand, as he beheld adown,
He saw the steppés broad of a lioun,
And in his heart he suddenly agrose,[3] 125
And pale he wax'd, therewith his heart arose,
And near he came, and found the wimple torn :
" Alas, quod he, the day that I was born!
This one night will both us loverés slee :
How should I asken mercy of Thisbe, 130
When I am he that have you slain?—alas!
My biding hath you slainé in this case.
Alas! to bid a woman go by night
In placé there[4] as peril fallen might,
And I so slow : alas! I ne had be[5] 135
Here in this place a furlong way ere ye.
Now what lióun that is in this forést
My body must be renten, or what beast
That wild is, gnawen must he now mine heart."
And with that word he to the wimple start, 140
And kiss'd it oft, and wept on it full sore,
And saidé, " Wimple', alas! there n'is no more,
But thou shalt feel as well the blood of me
As thou hast felt the bleeding of Thisbe :"
And with that word he smote him to the heart. 145
The blood out of the wound as broad astart
As water, when the conduit broken is.
Now Thisbe, which that ne wist not of this,
But sitting in her dread she thoughté thus;
" If it so fallen that my Pyramus 150
Be comen hither, and may me not ifind,
He may me holden false and eke unkind."

[1] Awaped—terrified, or, stupefied with terror. [2] Nome—taken. [3] Agrose—shuddered. [4] There—where. [5] Ne had be—Alas! that I had not been a furlong before you.



O! who could
Hath Thisbe
And how she
And how she
And how she
How meddleth
How with his
How clippeth
How doth this
How kisseth sh
"Who hath do
To slay my life
I am thy Thisb
And therewitha
This woful m
When that he h
On her he cast
And down agai
Thisbe rist u
And saw her wi
And eke his sw
Then spake she
Is strong enoug
For love shall g
To make my wo
I will thee follow
Fellow' and caus
And though that
Might thee from
Thou shalt no m

We prayen you withouten more envý
That in one gravé we both moten[1] lie,
Since love hath brought us to this piteous end:
And rightwise God to every lover send, 200
That loveth truely, more prosperity
Than ever had Pyramus and Thisbe;
And let no gentle woman her assure
To putten her in such an áventure:
But God forbid but that a woman can 205
Be as true and loving as a man,
And for my part I shall anon it kith;"[2]
And with that word his sword she tooké swith,[3]
That warm was of her lovés blood and hot,
And to the hearté she her selven smote. 210
And thus are Thisbe' and Pyramus ago:[4]
Of trewé men I finden but few mo
In all my bookés save this Pyramus,
And therefore have I spoken of him thus;
For it is dainty to us men to find 215
A man that can in love be true and kind.
Here may ye see, what lover so he be,
A woman dare and can[5] as well as he.

[1] Moten — may. [2] Kith — make it known. [3] Swith — quickly. Ago—gone, passed away. [5] And can—and is able to do.

THE LEGEND OF

LUCRETIA OF ROME.

Tarquinius and Collatinus leave the camp and ride to the house of the latter, for the purpose of proving the fidelity of his wife, Lucretia, in her domestic duties.

* * * * *

To Romé they be comen, and fast them dight[1]
To Colatinus' house, and down they light,
Tarquinius and eke this Colatine;
The husband knew the efters well and fine,[2]
And full privily into the house they gone: 5
Nor at the gate ne porter was there none,
And at the chamber dooré they abide.
This noble wife sat by her beddés side
Dischevel'd, for no malice she ne thought,
And softé wool (saith Livy) that she wrought 10
To keepen her from sloth and idleness,
And bad her servants do their business,
And asketh them; "What tidings hearen ye?
How saith men of the siege, how shall it be?
God would the wallés were fall'n adown! 15
My husband is too long out of this town;
For which dread doth me sorély to smart,
Right as a sword it stingeth to mine heart
When I thinken on this or of that place;
God save my lord, I pray him for his grace!" 20
And therewithal so tenderly 'gan weep,
And of her work she took no moré keep,[3]
But meekély she let her eyen fall,
And thilké semblant[4] sat her well[5] withal,
And eke her tearés, full of honesty, 25

[1] Dight—repaired. [2] Efters well and fine—he knew all the private entries from first to last. [3] Keep—paid no more attention to. [4] Semblant—appearance. [5] Sat her well—became her.

Embellishéd her wifely chastity;
Her countenance is to her hearté digne,[1]
For they accordeden in deed and sign.
And with that word her husband Colatin,
Ere she of him was 'ware, came starting in, 30
And sayéd; "Dread thee not for I am here:"
And she anon up rose with blissful cheer,
And kiss'd him, as of wivés is the won.[2]
Tarquinius, this proudé kingés son,
Conceivéd hath her beauty and her cheer,[3] 35
Her yellow hair, her bounty, and her mannere,
Her hue, her wordés, that she hath complainéd,
And by no craft her beauty was not feignéd,
And caught unto this lady such desire
That in his heart he burn'd as any fire, 40
So woodly,[4] that his wit was all forgotten,
For well thought he she shouldé not be gotten;
And aye the more that he was in despair
The more he coveteth and thought her fair;
His blindé lust was all his coveting. 45
On morrow, when the bird began to sing,
Unto the siege he com'th full privily,
And by himself he walketh soberly,
Th' imáge of her recording alway new,
Thus lay her hair, and thus fresh was her hue, 50
Thus sat she, thus she spake, this was her cheer,
Thus fair she was, and this was her mannere:
All this conceit his heart hath new ytake,[5]
And as the sea with tempest all to-shake,
That after when the storm is all ago,[6] 55
Yet will the water quappe[7] a day or two;
Right so, though that her formé were absént
The pleasance of her formé was presént;
But natheless not pleasance but delight,
Or an unrightful talent with despite; 60
"For maugre her, she shall my leman be;
Hap helpeth hardy man alway, quod he;
What endé that I make,[8] it shall be so;"
And girt him with his sword, and 'gan to go:
And he forth rode till he to Rome is come, 65
And all alone his way that he hath nome[9]
Unto the house of Colatine full right:—
Down was the sun, and day hath lost his light;

[1] Digne—her countenance was worthy of her heart. [2] Won—custom. [3] Cheer—conduct, behaviour. [4] Woodly—madly. [5] Ytake—taken, caught. [6] Ago—gone. [7] Quappe—roll, fluctuate. [8] What ende that I make—come what may of it, so shall it be. [9] Nome—taken.

And in he came unto a privy halke,[1]
And in the night full thiefly 'gan he stalk, 70
When every wight was to his rest ybrought,
Ne no wight had of treason such a thought,
Whether by window or by other gin :
With sword ydrawn shortly he cometh in
There[2] as she lay, this noble wife Lucrece, 75
And as she woke, her bed she felten press ;
"What beast is that, quod she ,that weigheth[3] thus?"
"I am the kingés son, Tarquinius,
Quod he, but and thou cry, or noise ymake,
Or if thou any creáture awake, 80
By thilké God that forméd man on live,
This swordé through thine hearté shall I rive."
And therewithal unto her throat he start,
And set the sword all sharp upon her heart.
No word she spake ; she hath no might thereto; 85
What shall she say? her wit is all ago:[4]
As when a wolf findeth a lamb alone ;
To whom shall she complain or make her moan?
What! shall she fighten with a hardy knight?
Well wotte men that a woman hath no might ; 90
What shall she cry, or how shall she astart,
That hath her by the throat with sword at heart?
She asketh grace, and said all that she can.
"No, wilt thou not then? quod this cruel man;
As wisely[5] Jupiter my soulé save, 95
As I shall in thy stable slay thy knave[6]
And lay him in thy bed, and loudé cry
That I thee find in such avoutery :[7]
And thus thou shalt be dead, and also lese[8]
Thy name, for that thou shalt none other chese."[9] 100
These Roman wivés lovéd so their name,
At thilké time, and dreaded so the shame,
That what for fear of slander' and dread of death
She lost at onés both her wit and breath,
And in a swoon she lay, and woxe so dead, 105
Men mighten smiten off her arm or head.

* * * * *

Tarquinius, thou art a kingés heir,
And shouldest as by lineage and by right,
Do as a lord and as a very knight,
Why hast thou done despite to chivalry? 110
Why hast thou done thy lady villainy?

[1] Halke — corner. [2] There — where. [3] Weigheth — presseth. [4] Ago—gone. [5] Wisely—surely. [6] Knave—man servant. [7] Avoutery —adultery. [8] Lese—lose. [9] Chese—choose.

Alas! of thee this was a vil'nous deed.
But now to th' purpose. In the story' I read
When he was gone, and this mischance is fall,[1]
This lady sent aftér her friendés all, 115
Father, mother, and husband, all ifere,[2]
And, discheveléd with her hairé clear,
In habit such as women uséd tho[3]
Unto the burying of their friendés go,
She sat in hall with a sorrówful sight: 120
Her friendés asken what her ailen might,
And who was dead? and she sat aye weeping;
A word, for shame, ne may she forth out bring,
Ne upon them she dursté not behold:
But at the last of Tarquin she them told 125
This rueful case, and all this thing horríble:
The woe to tell were impossíble
That she and all her friendés make at once;
Al'[4] hadden folkés heartés been of stones,
It might have maked them upon her rue, 130
Her heart ywas so wifely and so true.
She said that for her guilt ne for her blame
Her husband should not have the foulé name;
That wouldé she not suffer by no way.
And they answeréd all unto her fay[5] 135
That they forgave it her, for it was right,
It was no guilt, it lay not in her might,
And saiden her examples many one:
But all for naught, for thus she said anon;
"Be as be may, quod she, of forgiving, 140
I will not have no fórgift for nothíng:"
But privily she caughten forth a knife,
And therewithal she reft herself her life;
And as she fell adown she cast her look,
And of her clothés yet good heed she took, 145
For in her falling yet she had a care
Lest that her feet or such thingés lay bare,
So well she lovéd cleanness and eke truth.
Of her had all the town of Romé ruth;
And Brutus hath by her chaste blood yswore 150
That Tarquin should ybanish'd be therefore
And all his kin, and let[6] the people call,
And openly the tale he told them all,
And openly let carry' her on a bier
Through all the town, that men may see and hear
Th' horríble deed of her oppressión; 156

[1] Fall — befallen. [2] Ifere — together. [3] Tho — then. [4] Al' — although. [5] Fay—faith, truth, pledge. [6] Let — summoned the people.

Ne never was there king in Romé town
Since thilké day: and she was holden there
A saint, and e'er her day yhallow'd dear,
As in their law. And thus endeth Lucrece 160
The noble wife; Titus beareth witness.
I tell it, for[1] she was of love so true,
Ne in her will she changéd for no new,[2]
And in her stable hearté sad[3] and kind,
That in these women men may all day find 165
Thereas[4] they cast their hearté there it dwelleth;
For well I wot that Christ himselfé telleth
That in Israël, wide as is the lond,
He so great faith in all the land ne found
As in a woman, and this is no lie: 170
And as for men, look ye such tyranny
They do all day, essay them who so list,
The truest is full brittle for to trist.

[1] For—because. [2] New—novelty. [3] Sad—steadfast. [4] Thereas—whereas.

"High upon a rock she wenten soon,
And saw his barge ysailing in the sea:
Cold wax'd her heart."—l. 253.

LEGEND OF

ARIADNE OF ATHENS.

Minos, king of Crete, in revenge for the assassination of his son Androgeus, whom he had sent to Athens to study, demanded that every third year a young Athenian should, by lot, be yielded up to him; whom he delivered to the Minotaur to be devoured.

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* * * * *

THIS wicked custom is so long yrun
Till that the King of Athenés, Ægæus,
Must send his owné sonné Theseus,
Since that the lot is fallen him upon,
To be devouréd, for grace is there none: 5
And forth is led this woful youngé knight
Unto the country of Minos full of might,
And in a prison fetter'd fast is he
Till that ilk time he should yfretten[1] be.

[1] Yfretten—devoured.

Well may'st thou weep, O woful Theseus! 10
That art a kingés son and damned thus;
Me thinketh this, that thou art deep yhold[1]
To whom[2] that savéd thee from carés cold,
And now if any woman helpé thee,
Well oughtest thou her servant for to be, 15
And be her trué lover year by year.
But now to come again to my mattére.
The tow'ré there this Theseus is throw[3]
Down in the bottom dark and wonder low,
Was joining to the wall of a forein[4] 20
That 'longing was unto the daughtren twain
Of Minos, which that in their chambers great
Dwelten above, towárd the master-street[5]
Of thilké town in joy and in solace:
N'ot I not how, it happened per case,[6] 25
As Theseus complainéd him by night,
The kingés daughter that Ariadne hight,
And eke her sister Phœdra, hearden all
His cómplaint as they stooden on the wall,
And lookéd up upon the brighté moon, 30
Them listen[7] not to go to bed so soon,
And of his woe they had compassión;
A kingés son to be in such prisón,
And be devoured, thought them great pitý:
Then Ariadne spake t' her sister free,[8] 35
And sayed; "Phœdra, my lefé[9] sister dear!
This woful lordés son may ye not hear,
How piteously he cómplaineth his kin,[10]
And eke his poor estate that he is in,
And guiltiless? Certes now it is ruth, 40
And if ye will assenten, by my truth
He shall be holpen, how so that we do."[11]
Phœdra answér'd, "Ywis[12] me is as woe
For him as e'er I was for any man,
And to his help the best rede[13] that I can 45
Is, that we do the gaoler privily
To come and speaken with us hastily,
And do this woful man with him to come;
For if he may this monster overcome,

[1] Yhold — beholden. [2] To whom — *i.e.* to the person whom. [3] There this Theseus is throw—wherein this Theseus was thrown. [4] Forein—passage. [5] Master-street—the main street. [6] Per case—by chance. [7] Listen not—did not wish. [8] Free—generous. [9] Lefe—glad, pleasant. [10] Complaineth his kin—reproacheth his parent. [11] How so that we do—however we may accomplish it. [12] Ywis—indeed. [13] Rede—advice.

Then were he quit, there is none other boot :[1] 50
Let us well test him at his heartés root,
That if so be that he a weapon have,
Where that he dare, his life to keep and save,
Fight with this fiendé, and himself defend ;
For in the prison there[2] he shall descend, 55
Ye wot well that the beast is in a place
That is not dark, and hath room and eke space
To wield an axe, or sword, a staff, or knife,
So that me thinketh he should save his life ;
If that he be a man he shall do so : 60
And we shall make him ballés eke also
Of wax and tow, that when he gapeth fast,
Into the beastés throat he shall them cast
To slake his hunger and encumber' his teeth :—
And right anon, when that Theseus seeth 65
The beast achokéd, he shall on him leap
To slay him ere they comen more to heap.[3]
This weapon shall the gaoler ere that tide[4]
Full privily within the prison hide:
And, for[5] the house is crankled to and fro, 70
And hath so quainté wayés for to go,
For[5] it is shapen as the maze is wrought;
Thereto have I a remed' in my thought,
That by a clue of twine as he hath gone,
The samé way he may return anon, 75
Foll'wing alway the thread as he hath come :
And when that he this beast hath overcome,
Then may he flee away out of his stede,[6]
And eke the gaoler may he with him lead,
And him advance at home in his countrý, 80
Since that so great a lordés son is he.
This is my rede,[7] if that ye dare it take."
What should I longer sermon of it make?—
The gaoler com'th, and with him Theseus;
And when these thinges been accorded thus, 85
Adown sat Theseus upon his knee :—
"O the right lady of my life ! quod he,
I sorrowful man, ydamned to the death,
From you that whilé me ylasteth breath
I will not twin[8] after this áventure, 90
But in your service thus I will endure;
That as a wretch unknown I will you serve
For evermore till that mine hearté sterve.[9]

[1] Boot—end. [2] There—where. [3] More to heap—more closely together. [4] Tide—time. [5] For—because. [6] Stede—place. [7] Rede—advice. [8] Twin—separate. [9] Sterve—die.

Forsake I will at home mine heritage,
And as I said, be of your court a page, 95
If that ye vouchsafen that in this place
Ye granten me to haven such a grace
That I may have naught but my meat and drink;
And for my sustenance yet will I swink[1]
Right as you list, that Minos ne no wight,[2] 100
Since that he saw me never with eyesight,
Ne no man ellés, shall me not espy,
So slily and so well I shall me gye,[3]
And me so well disfigure and so low,
That in this world there shall no man me know; 105
To have my life and to have the presence
Of you that done to me this excellence.
And to my father shall I senden here
This worthy man, which that is your gaoler,
And him so guerdon[4] that he shall well be 110
One of the greatest men of my countrý:
And if I dursté say, my lady bright!
I am a kingés son and eke a knight,
As wouldé God if that it might ybe
Ye weren in my country allé three, 115
And I with you to bear you company;
Then should you see if that I thereof lie,
And if I profer[5] you in low mannére
To be your page, and serven you right here,
But[6] I you serve as lowly in that place, 120
I pray to Mars to give me suché grace
That shamés death on me there moté[7] fall,
And death and povert' to my friendés all,
And that my spirit by night moté go
After my death and walken to and fro, 125
That I may of foul traitor have a name,
For which my sprite may go, to do me shame,
And if I claim ever other degree,
But[6] ye vouchsafen to grant it me,
As I have said, of shamés death I dey, 130
And mercy, lady! I can naught else say."
A seemly knight was this Theseus to see,
And youngé, but of twenty years and three,
But whoso had yseen his countenance,
He would have wept for ruth of his penánce: 135
For which this Ariadne' in this mannere
Answer'd to his profer[5] and to his cheer:

[1] Swink—labour. [2] Ne no wight—nor any person. [3] Gye—conduct myself. [4] Guerdon—reward. [5] Profer—propose, offer. [6] But—except, unless. [7] Mote—may.

"A kingés son and eke a knight, quod she,
To be my servant in so low degree
God shield it! for the shame of women all, 140
And lene[1] me never such a case befall,
And send you grace and sleight[2] of heart also
You to defend and knightly slay your foe;
And lene[1] hereafter that I may you find
To me, and to my sister here so kind, 145
That I ne repent not to give you life:—
Yet were it better that I were your wife,
Sith that ye be as gentle born as I,
And have a realm not far but fasté by,
Than I suffer'd your gentleness to sterve,[3] 150
Or that I let you as a page to serve:
It is no profit unto your kindred,
But what is that that men n'ill do for dread?
And to my sister sith that it is so
That she must go with me if that I go, 155
Or ellés suffer death as well as I;
That ye unto your son as truély
Do her be wedded at your home coming:
This is the final end of all this thing,
Ye swear it here on all that may be sworn." 160
"Yea, lady mine, quod he, or else to-torn
May I be with the Minotaur to-morrow,
And haveth here of mine heartblood to borrow,[4]
If that ye will, if I had knife or spear
I would it letten out and thereon swear; 165
For then at erst[5] I wot ye would me 'lieve.
By Mars, that is the chief of my believe,
So that I mighten liven and not fail
To-morrow for to taken my battáile,
I ne would never from this placé flee, 170
Till that ye should the very proof ysee:
For now, if that the soth I shall you say,
I have lovéd you full many a day,
Though ye ne wist it not, in my countrý,
And aldermost[6] desired you to see 175
Of any earthly living creáture:
Upon my truth I swear and you assure,
This seven year I have your servant be;
Now have I you, and also have ye me,
My dearé heart! of Athenés Duchéss." 180
This lady smileth at his steadfastness,

[1] Lene — grant. [2] Sleight—cunning, adroitness. [3] Sterve — die. [4] To borrow — in pledge. [5] At erst —at first, at once. [6] Aldermost — most of all.

And at his heartly words, and at his cheer,
And to her sister said in this mannére:
"And sothly, 'lieve all sister mine, quod she,
Now be we duchesses both I and ye, 185
And siker'd[1] to the regals of Athenes,
And both hereafter likely to be queens,
And savéd from his death a kingés son,
As e'er of gentlewomen is the won[2]
To save a gentleman enforth their might,[3] 190
In honest cause, and namely in his right,
Methinketh no wight ought us hereof blame,
Ne bearen us therefore an evil name."
And shortly of this matter for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leave ytake, 195
And every point was pérforméd in deed
As ye have in this cov'nant heard me read:
His weapon, his clue, his thing, that I have said,
Was by the gaoler in the house ylaid,
Thereas[4] the Minotaur hath his dwelling, 200
Right fasté by the door at his ent'ring,
And Theseus is led unto his death:
And forth unto this Minotaur he geth,[5]
And by the teaching of this Adriane
He overcame this beast and was his bane; 205
And out he cometh by the clue again
Full privily, when he this beast hath slain,
And by the gaoler gotten hath a barge,
And of his wivés treasure 'gan it charge,
And took his wife and eke her sister free,[6] 210
And eke the gaoler, and with them all three
Is stole away out of the land by night,
And to the country' of Enupie him dight,[7]
Thereas he had a friend of his knowing;
There feasten they, there dancen they and sing, 215
And in his armés hath this Adriane,
That of the beast hath kept him from his bane;
And gat him there a noble barge anon,
And of his country folk a full great won,[8]
And tak'th his leave, and homeward saileth he; 220
And in an isle amid the wildé sea,
Thereas there dwelled never creature none
Save wildé beasts, and that full many one,
He made his ship alandé for to set
And in that islé half a day he let,[9] 225

[1] Siker'd—assured, united. [2] Won—custom. [3] Enforth their might—to the uttermost of their power. [4] Thereas—whereas. [5] Geth—goeth; a license for the sake of the rhyme. [6] Free—bountiful. [7] Dight—disposed. [8] Won—company. [9] Let—stayed.

And said, that on the land he must him rest.
His mariners have done right as him lest.[1]
And for to tellen shortly in this case,
When Ariadne' his wife asleepé was,
For[2] that her sister fairer was than she, 230
He tak'th her in his hand, and forth go'th he
To ship, and as a traitor stole away
While that this Ariadne' asleepé lay,
And to his countryward he saileth blive,[3]
(A twenty devil way the wind him drive!) 235
And found his father drenchéd[4] in the sea.
Me list no more to speak of him pardé;
These falsé lovers poison be their bane!
But I will turn again to Adriane,
That is with sleep for weariness ytake,[5] 240
Full sorrowfully' her hearté may awake.
Alas! for thee mine heart hath great pitý.
Right in the dawening awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bed, and found right naught.
"Alas, quod she, that ever I was wrought! 245
I am betrayéd;" and her hair to-rent,
And to the strand all barefoot fast she went,
And cryéd; "Theseus, mine hearté sweet!
Where be ye, that I may not with you meet,
And might thus with the beastés been yslain?" 250
The hollow rockés answer'd her again;
No man she saw, and yet yshone the moon;
And high upon a rock she wenten soon,
And saw his barge ysailing in the sea;
Cold wax'd her heart, and right thus sayéd she: 255
"Meeker than ye find I the beastés wild."
Hath he not sin that he her thus beguil'd?
She cried; "O turn again for ruth and sin!
Thy barge ne hath not all his meiné[6] in."
Her couvr'chief on a polé sticked she 260
Ascancé[7] that he should it well ysee,
And him remember that she was behind,
And turn again, and on the strand her find.
But all for naught; his way he is agone;
And down she fell a-swoon upon a stone, 265
And up she rist, and kiss'd in all her care
The steppés of his feet there he hath fare,[8]
And to her bed right thus she speaketh tho:[9]
"Thou bed, quod she, that hast receivéd two,

[1] Lest—desired. [2] For—because. [3] Blive—briskly. [4] Drenched—drowned. [5] Ytake—overtaken. [6] Meine—company. [7] Ascance—in order that. [8] There he hath fare—where he had trod. [9] Tho—then.

Thou shalt answer of two and not of one; 270
Where is the greater parté? away gone?
"Alas! where shall I wretched wight become?
For though so be that booté[1] none here come,
Home to my country dare I not for drede;
I can my selfen in this case not rede."[2] 275
What should I tellen more her cómplaining?
It is so long it were a heavy thing;
In her epistle Naso telleth all.
But shortly to the end tellen I shall,
The goddés have her holpen for pitý, 280
And in the sign of Taurus men may see
The stonés of her coroun shiné clear.—
I will no moré speak of this mattére;
But thus this falsé lover can beguile
His trué love; the dev'l quit him his wile![3] 285

[1] Boote—help. [2] Not rede—I cannot counsel myself in this case.
[3] Quit him his wile—reward his deceit, or trick.

THE

LEGEND OF PHYLLIS.

Demophoön, the son of Theseus, in returning to his native Athens, is wrecked in a storm upon Rhodopé, of which Phyllis, daughter of Lycurgus, was the queen, and fairer

"Than is the flow'r against the brighté sun."

After having won her heart, Demophoön feigns the necessity of proceeding forward to Athens, to prepare for their wedding, plighting his truth at the same time to return to her in one month. When the lapsing of month after month confirmed the treachery of her lover, she sent him the following simply eloquent appeal.

"THINE hostess, quod she, O Demophoön!
Thy Phyllis, which that is so woe begone,
Of Rhodopea upon you must complain,
Over the term yset betwixt us twain
That ye ne holden foreword[1] as ye said. 5
Your anchor which ye in our haven laid
Hight[2] us that ye would comen out of doubt
Ere that the mooné onés went about,
But timés four the moon hath hid her face
Since thilké day ye wenten from this place, 10
And fowér timés light[3] the world again;
But for all that yet shall I sothly sain,
Yet hath the stream of Scython not ybrought
From Athenés the ship, yet came it not;
And if that ye the termé reckon would 15
As I or other true lovérs do should,
I 'plainé not (God wot) before my day.
* * * * *
—— The sailés cometh not again,
Ne to thy word there n'is no fay[4] certáin: 20
But I wot why ye comen not, quod she,
For[5] I was of my love to you so free:[6]

[1] Foreword — pledge. [2] Hight — promised. [3] Light — lighten. [4] Fay—faith. [5] For—because. [6] Free—liberal, bount'f

And of the goddés that ye have yswore,
If that their vengeance fall on you therefore,
Ye be not suffisant to bear the pain; 25
Too muchel trusted I, well may I sain,
Upon your lineage and your fairé tongue,
And on your tearés falsely out ywrung.
How could ye weepen so by craft? quod she,
May there such tearés ever feignéd be? 30
"Now certés if ye would have in memóry
It oughten be to you but little glory
To have a silly[1] maiden thus betrayéd.
To God, quod she, pray I, and oft have prayéd,
That it be now the greatest price of all, 35
And most honóur that e'er you shall befall:
And when thine old ancestors painted be,
In which men may their worthiness ysee,
Then pray I God thou painted be also,
That folk may readen forthby as they go,— 40
'Lo! this is he that with his flattery
Betrayéd hath and done her villainy
That was his trué love in thought and deed!'
"But sothly of one point yet may they read,
That ye be like your father as in this, 45
For he beguiléd Ariadne iwis[2]
With such an art and such a subtlety
As thou thy selven hast beguiléd me.
As in that point, although it be not fair,
Thou followest certáin, and art his heir: 50
But since thus sinfully ye me beguile,
My body may ye see within a while
Right in the haven of Athenés fleeting,
Withouten sepulture and burying,
Though ye be harder than is any stone." 55
And when this letter was forth sent anon,
And knew how brittle and how false he was,
She for despair fordid[3] herself, alas!
Such sorrow hath she, for she beset her so.[4]
Beware ye women of your subtle foe, 60
Since yet this day men may example see;—
And trusteth now in love no man but me.

[1] Silly—simple, trusting. [2] Iwis—in truth, certainly. [3] Fordid—destroyed. [4] For she beset her so—because she so beset, or tormented, herself.

THE

LEGEND OF HYPERMNESTRA.

Hypermnestra, the daughter of Egistus, marries Lino, her cousin. On the night of their nuptials, her father charges her to destroy her husband during his sleep. Through fear of her father's threats she consents to his demand, but disobeys when she looks upon the face of her sleeping bridegroom.

* * * * *

AND thus Lino hath of his father's brother
The daughter wedded, and each of them hath other.
The torches brennen and the lampés bright,
The sacrifices be full ready dight,
Th' incense out of the fire out raketh sote,[1] 5
The flow'r the leaf, is rent up by the root
To maken garlandés and crownés high;
Full is the place of sound of minstrelsy,
Of songés amorous of marriáge,
As thilké timé was the plain uságe; 10
And this was in the palace of Egiste,
That in his house was lord right as him list;[2]
And thus that day they driven to an end,
The friendés taken leave, and home they wend.
The night is come, the bride shall go to bed, 15
Egistus to his chamber fast him sped,
And privily he let his daughter call
When that the house was voided of them all;
He looketh on his daughter with glad cheer,
And to her spake as ye shall after hear. 20
"My right daughtér, the treasure of mine heart!
Since first that day that shapen was my shirt,
Or by the Fatal Sister had my doom,
So nigh mine heart never thing ne come,
As thou my Hypermnestra, daughter dear! 25
Take heedé what thy father saith thee here,

[1] Raketh sote—poureth sweet. [2] As him list—according to his pleasure.

And work after thy wiser[1] evermo,
For alderfirst[2] daughtér I love thee so,
That all the world to me n'is half so lief,[3]
Ne I n'olde redé[4] thee to thy mischiéf 30
For all the good under the coldé moon :
And what I mean it shall be said right soon,
With protestatión, as say these wise,
That but[5] thou do as I shall thee devise,
Thou shalt be dead, by him that all hath wrought. 35
At shorté wordés, thou ne scapest not
Out of my palace ere that thou be dead
But thou consent and work after my rede;[4]
Take this to thee for full conclusión."
This Hypermnestra cast her eyen down, 40
And quoke as doth the leaf of aspen green,
Dead wax'd her hue, and like ashen to seen,
And sayéd ; "Lord and father, all your will,
After my might, God wot I shall fulfil,
So it be to me no confusión." 45
"I n'ill (quod he) have no exceptión,"
And out he caught a knife as razor keen ;
"Hide this (quod he) that it be not iseen,
And when thine husband is to bed ygo,
While that he sleepeth cut his throat a-two, 50
For in my dream it is ywarnéd me
How that my nephew shall my bane ybe,
But which I n'ot,[6] wherefore I will be siker;[7]
If thou say nay we two shall have a biker,[8]
As I have said, by him that I have sworn." 55
This Hypermnestr' hath nigh her wit forlorn;
And for to pass harmléss out of that place,
She granted him ; there was no other grace.
And therewithal a costrell[9] taketh he,
And said ; "Hereof a draught or two, or three, 60
Give him to drinké when he go'th to rest,
And he shall sleep as long as e'er thee lest,[10]
The nárcotics and apies[11] be so strong ;—
And go thy way, lest that him think too long."
Out cometh the bride, and with full sober cheer, 65
As is of maidens often the mannére,
To chamber brought with revel and with song :
And shortly, lest this talé be too long,

[1] Thy wiser—thy superior in wisdom. [2] Alderfirst—first of all. [3] Lief—dear. [4] Rede—counsel. [5] But—unless, except. [6] N'ot—know not. [7] Siker—secure. [8] Biker—quarrel. [9] Costrell—drinking cup. [10] Thee lest—as long as you wish. [11] Apies—for opies, opiates.

This Lino and she both been brought to bed,
And every wight out at the door him sped. 70
The night is wasted, and he fell asleep:
Full tenderly beginneth she to weep;
She rist her up, and dreadfully she quaketh,
As doth the branch that Zephyrus yshaketh;
And hush'd were all in Aragon that cityé. 75
As cold as any frost now waxeth she,
For pity by the heart strainéd her so,
And dread of death doth her so muché woe,
That thriés down she fell; in such a were[1]
She rist her up, and staggereth here and there, 80
And on her handés fasté looketh she:
"Alas! quod she, shall my hands bloody be!
I am a maiden, and by my natúre,
And by my semblant, and by my vesture,
My handés be not shapen for a knife, 85
As for to reven[2] no man from his life:
What devil have I with the knife to do?
And shall I have my throat ycarve a-two?
Then shall I bleed, alas! and be yshend:[3]
And needés of this thing must have an end;[4] 90
Or he or I must needés lose our life.
Now certes, quod she, since I am his wife,
And hath my faith, yet is it bet for me
For to be dead in wifely honesty,
Than be a traitor living in my shame. 95
Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
He shall awake, and rise and go his way
Out at this gutter ere that it be day."
And wept full tenderly upon his face,
And in her armés 'gan him to embrace, 100
And him she roggeth[5] and awaketh soft;
And at the window leap'd he from the loft
When she hath warned him and done him bote.[6]
This Lino swift ywas and light of foot,
And from his wife he ran a full good pace. 105
This silly woman is so weak, alas!
And helpless, so that ere she far ywent,
Her cruel father did her for to hent.[7]
Alas, Lino! why art thou so unkind?
Why ne hast thou rememb'red in thy mind 110

[1] Were—confusion, bewilderment. [2] Reven—bereave, take away. [3] Yshend—destroyed. [4] This thing must have an end—this business must of necessity terminate. [5] Roggeth—qu? rocketh, shaketh. [6] Done him bote—given him assistance. [7] Did her for to hent—had her seized.

And taken her and led her forth with thee?
For when she saw that gone away was he,
And that she ne might not so fast ygo,
Ne followen him, she sat down righté tho[1]
Till she was caught and fett'red in prisón; 115
This Tale is said for this conclusión.

[1] Tho—then.

CHAUCER'S LOVE OF RURAL NATURE.

FROM THE PROLOGUE TO THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

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* * * * *

AND as for me, though that I can but lite,[1]
On bookés for to read I me delight,
And to them give I faith and full credence,
And in mine heart have them in reverence 5
So heartily, that there is gamé none
That from my bookés maketh me to gone,
But it be seldom, on the holy day,
Save certainly when that the month of May
Is comen, and I hear the fowlés sing, 10
And that the flow'rés 'ginnen for to spring,—
Farewell my book and my devotión.
Now have I then eke this conditión,
That above all the flow'rés in the mead
Then love I most these flow'rés white and red, 15
Such that men callen Daisies in our town;
To them have I so great affectión,
As I said erst, when comen is the May,
That in my bed there daweth me no day
That I n'am up and walking in the mead 20
To see this flow'r against the sunné spread,
When it upriseth early by the morrow;
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow;
So glad am I when that I have presénce
Of it, to doen it all revérence, 25
As she that is of all flow'rés the flow'r,
Fulfilléd of all virtue and honóur,
And ever aliké fair and fresh of hue
As well in winter as in summer new;
This love I ever', and shall until I die, 30
Al'[2] swear I not of this, I will not lie.

* * * * *

[1] Can but lite—know but little. [2] Al'—although.

My busy ghost,[1] that thirsteth alway new
To see this flower so young, so fresh of hue,
Constrainéd me with so greedy desire
That in mine heart I feelen yet the fire 35
That madé me to rise ere it were day,
And this was now the first morrów of May,
With dreadful[2] heart and glad devotión
For to be at the resurrectión
Of this flow'r, when that it should unclose 40
Against the sun, that rose as red as rose,
That in the breast was of the beast that day,
That Agenorés daughter[3] led away;
And down on knees anon right I me set,
And as I could this freshé flow'r I grette,[4] 45
Kneeling alway till it unclosédwas
Upon the small, and soft, and sweeté grass,
That was with flow'rés sweet embroider'd all,
Of such sweetnéss and such odóur o'er all
That for to speak of gummé, herb, or tree, 50
Comparison may none imakéd be;
For it surmounteth plainly all odóurs,
And of rich beauty the most gay of flow'rs.
Forgotten had the earth his poor estate
Of winter, that him naked made and mate,[5] 55
And with his sword of cold so soré grievéd;
Now hath th' attemper[6] sun all that relievéd
That naked was, and clad it new again;
The smallé fowlés, of the season fain,[7]
That of the panter[8] and the net been 'scaped, 60
Upon the fowler that them made awhaped[9]
In winter, and destroyéd had their brood,
In his despite them thought it did them good
To sing of him, and in their song despise
The foulé churl that for his covetise 65
Had them betrayéd with his sophistry.[10]

[1] Ghost—spirit, mind. [2] Dreadful—timid. [3] Agenor's daughter—Europa. [4] Grette—greeted. [5] Mate—cast down. [6] Attemper—temperate. [7] Fain—glad. [8] Panter—a species of net. [9] Awhaped—confounded. [10] Sophistry—subtlety.

VISION OF THE GOD OF LOVE.

FROM THE PROLOGUE TO THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

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* * * * *

WHEN that the sun out of the south 'gan west,
And that this flow'r 'gan close and go to rest,
For darkness of the night the which she drede,
Home to mine house full swiftly I me speed
To go to rest, and early for to rise 5
To see this flow'r* to spread as I devise;[1]
And in a little arbour that I have,
That benchéd was of turvés fresh igrave,[2]
I bade men shoulden me my couché make;
For dainty[3] of the newé summer's sake 10
I bade them strewén flow'rés on my bed.
When I was laid and had mine eyen hed[4]
I fell asleep, and slept an hour or two,
Me met[5] how I lay in the meadow tho[6]
To see this flow'r that I lové so and dread; 15
And from afar came walking in the mead
The god of Love, and in his hand a queen,
And she was clad in royal habit green,
A fret[7] of gold she haddé next her hair,
And upon that a white coróun she bare 20
With florouns smallé, and, I shall not lie,
For all the world right as a Daïsy
Icrownéd is, with whité leavés lite,[8]
So were the florouns of her crowné white:
For of one pearlé finé oriental 25
Her white corouné was imakéd all,
For which the white coroun above the green
Ymade her like a Daisy for to seen,

[1] Devise—describe. [2] Igrave—cut. [3] Dainty—value, respect. [4] Hed—hidden. [5] Met—dreamed. [6] Tho—then. [7] Fret—band. [8] Lite—small.

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* The Margarete, or Daisy.

Consid'red eke[1] her fret of gold above.
Iclothéd was this mighty god of Love 30
In silk embroider'd, full of greené greves,[2]
In which there was a fret of red rose leaves,
The freshest since the world was first begun;
His gilt hair was ycrownéd with a sun
Instead of gold, for heaviness and weight, 35
Therewith methought his facé shone so bright
That well unnethés[3] might I him behold,
And in his hand methought I saw him hold
Two fiery dartés as the gledés[4] red,
And ángelic his wingés saw I spread; 40
And all be that men say that blind is he,
Algates[5] me thought that he might well ysee;
For sternely on me he 'gan behold,
So that his looking doth mine hearté cold;
And by the hand he held this noble queen, 45
Crownéd with white, and clothed all in green,
So womanly, so benigné, and so meek,
That in this world though that men woulden seek,
Half her beauty ne shoulden they not find
In creature that yforméd is by Kind.[6]

[1] Consid'red eke — taking also into consideration. [2] Greves — groves. [3] Unnethes — scarcely. [4] Gledes — flames. [5] Algates - nevertheless. [6] Kind—nature.

QUEEN ANNELIDA

AND

FALSE ARCITE.

Arcite, a Theban knight, forsaketh Queen Annelida, who loved him entirely and taketh a new lady, whereupon Annelida maketh this great complaint.

* * * * *

WHEN Theseus with warrés long and great
The aspre[1] folk of Scythia hath overcome,
The laurir crownéd, in his carré goldé-beat[2]
Home to his country houses is icome,
For which the people blissful, all and some,
So crieden that to the stars it went,
And him t' honóuren did all their intent. 7

Before this duke in sign of victory
The trompés come, and in his banner large
Th' imáge of Mars; and in tok'n of glory
Men mighten see of treasure many' a charge,
Many' a bright helm, and many' a spear and targe,
Many' a fresh knight, and many' a blissful rout
On horse and foot, in all the field about. 14

Hyppolita his wife, the hardy Queen
Of Scythia, that he conquéred had,
With Emelie her youngé sister sheen,[3]
Fair in a car of gold he with him led,
That all the ground about her car she spread
With brightness of the beauty in her face,
Fulfilléd all of largess[4] and of grace. 21

With his triúmph and laurir crownéd thus
In all the flow'r of Fortuné giving
Let I this noble prince, this Theseus,
Towárd Athenés in his way riding,
And fond[5] I will in shortly for to bring
The sly[6] way of that I began to write
Of Queen Annelida and false Arcite. 28

[1] Aspre—rough. [2] Golde beat—beaten, or manufactured, gold. [3] Sheen—shining. [4] Largess—bounty. [5] Fond—endeavour. [6] Sly—clever, adroit.

Mars, that through his furious course of ire,
The oldé wrath of Juno to fulfil,
Hath set the people's heartés both on fire
Of Thebes and Greece evereach other to kill
With bloody spearés, rested never still,
But throng now here now there among them both,
That evereach other slew, so were they wroth : 35

For when Amphiorax and Tydeus,
Hippomedon and Parthenope' also
Were dead, and slain was the proud Capaneus,
And when the wretched Thebans brethren two
Were slain, and King Adrastus home ago,
So desolate stood Thebés and so bare,
That no wight could[1] remédy of his care. 42

And when that the old Creon 'gan espy
How that the blood royal was brought adown
He held the city by his tyranny,
And did the gentles of that región
To be his friendés and dwell in the town ;
So what for love of him, and what for awe,
The noble folk were to the town idraw.[2] 49

Among all these Annelida the Queen
Of Ermonie was in that towné dwelling,
That fairer far was than the sunné sheen ;
Throughout the world so 'gan her name to spring,
That her to see had every wight liking,
For as of truth ne is there none her liche[3]
Of all the women in this worldé rich. 56

Young was this queen, of twenty yearés old,
Of middle stature, and of such fairness
That Nature had a joy her to behold ;
And for to speakén of her steadfastness,
She passéd hath Penelope' and Lucrece ;
And, shortly, if she shall be comprehended,[4]
In her there mighten nothing be amended. 63

This Theban knight Arcite' eke, soth to sain,
Was young, and therewithal a lusty knight,
But he was double' in love and nothing plain,
And subtle in that craft o'er any wight,
And with his cunning won this lady bright,
For so farforth he 'gan her truth assure,
That she him trusteth o'er any creature. 70

What should I say ? she loveth Arcité so
That when that he was absent any throw[5]

[1] Could — knew. [2] Idraw — drawn. [3] Liche — like. [4] Comprehended—taken for all in all. [5] Throw– short time.

Anon her thought her hearté burst a-two,
For in her sight to her he bare him low,
So that she ween'd have all his heart iknow ;[1]
But he was false, it n'as but feignéd cheer,
As needeth not such craftés men to lere.[2] 77

But ne'erthéless full muchel business
Had he ere that he might his lady win,
And swore that he would dyen for distress,
Or from his wit he sayéd he would twin ;
Alas the while ! for it was ruth and sin
That she upon his sorrowés would rue ;
But nothing think'th the false as doth the true. 84

Her freedom found Arcite in such mannere,
That all was his that she hath, much or lite,
Ne to no manner creature made she cheer
Farther than as it likéd to Arcite ;
There was no lack with which he might her wite ;[3]
She was so farforth given him to please,
That all that likéd him did her to ease. 91

There was to her no manner letter sent,
That touchéd love, from any manner wight,
That she ne showéd him ere it was brent,[4]
So plain she was, and did her fullé might
That she will hiden nothing from her knight,
Lest he of any untruth her upbraid ;
Withouten bode[5] his hearté she obey'd. 98

And eke he made him jealous over her,
That what that any man had to her said,
Anon he would yprayen her to swear
What was that word, or make him ill apaid ;[6]
Then weenéd she out of her wit have braid :[7]
But all was naught but sleight[8] and flattery ;
Withouten love he feignéd jealousy. 105

And all this took she so debonairly,
That all his will her thought it skilful thing,
And e'er the longer lov'd him tenderly,
And did him honour as he were a king ;
Her heart was to him wedded with a ring,
For so farforth on truth is her intent,
That where he goeth, her heart with him went. 112

[1] His heart iknow—so that she thought she knew all his heart. [2] Lere—men need not learn such crafts. [3] Wite—upbraid. [4] Brent—burned. [5] Bode—delay. [6] Or make him ill apaid—or he would be dissatisfied. [7] Braid—started. [8] Sleight—cunning.

When she shall eat, on him is so her thought,
That well unnethés of meat took she keep,[1]
And when that she was to her rest ybrought,
On him she thought alway till that she sleep,
When he was absent privily doth she weep.
Thus liveth fair Annelida the queen
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene.[2] 119

This false Arcite, of his newfangleness,[3]
For she to him so lowly was and true,
Ytook less dainty[4] for her steadfastness,
And saw another lady proud and new,
And right anon he clad him in her hue,[5]
(Wote I not whether in whité, red, or green,)
And falséd[6] fair Annelida the queen. 126

But ne'erthéless, great wonder was it none
Though he were false, for 't is the kind[7] of man
Sith Lamech was, that is so long agone,
To be in love as false as e'er he can;
He was the firsté father that began
To loven two, and was in bigamy;—
And he found tentés first, but if[8] men lie. 133

This false Arcite somewhat need must feign
When he was false, to coveren his traitory,
Right as a horse that can both bite and plain,[9]
For he bare her in hand[10] of tréachery,
And swore he could her doubleness espy,
And all was falseness that she to him meant;
Thus swore this thief, and forth his way he went. 140

Alas! what hearté might enduren it
For ruth or woe her sorrow for to tell,
Or what man hath the cunning or the wit,
Or what man might within the chamber dwell,
If I to him rehearsen shall the hell
That suff'reth fair Annelida the queen,
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene?[2] 147

She weepeth, waileth, swooneth, piteously;
To ground as dead she falleth as a stone;
She crampisheth[11] her limbés crookedly;
She speaketh as her wit were all agone;
Other colóur than ashen hath she none,

[1] Unnethes took keep—scarcely regarded her food. [2] Tene—sorrow, grief. [3] Newfangleness—inconstancy. [4] Less dainty—the less valued her steadfastness. [5] In her hue—dressed himself in her colours. [6] Falsed—betrayed. [7] Kind—nature. [8] But if—unless. [9] Plain—complain. [10] Bear in hand—to accuse. [11] Crampisheth—contracts violently, as with the cramp.

Ne other word speak'th she much or lite,
But "Mercy, cruel hearté mine, Arcite!" 154

* * * * *

Example' of this, ye thrifty women all,
Take heedé of Annelida' and false Arcite,
That for her list[1] him her dear hearté call,
And was so meek, therefore he lov'd her lite;[2]
The kind[3] of mannés heart is to delight
On thing that strange is, (all so God me save,)
For what they may not get, that would they have. 161

Now turné we t' Annelida again
That pineth day by day in languishing;
But when she saw that her ne got no gain,
Upon a day full sor'fully weeping,
She cast her for to make a complaining,
And with her owné hand she 'gan it write,
And sent it to her Theban knight Arcite. 168

THE COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO FALSE ARCITE.

"So thirléd[4] with the point of rémembrance
The sword of sorrow, whet with false pleasánce,
Mine hearté bare of bliss and black of hue,
That turnéd is to quaking all my dance,
My suréty in wapéd[5] countenance,
Since it availeth nothing to be true,
For whoso true is, certés it shall her rue
That serveth Love, and doth her óbservance
Alway to one, and changeth for no new. 177

I wot myself as well as any wight,
For I lov'd one with all mine heart and might,
More than myself a hundred thousand sith,[6]
And calléd him my heartés life, my knight,
And was all his as far as it was right,
And when that he was glad then was I blithe,
And his disease ywas my death as swith,[7]
And he again his truth hath to me plight
For evermore his lady me to kithe.[8] 186

Now is he false, alas! and causéless,
And of my woe he is so ruthéless
That with a word him list not onés deign
To bring again my sorr'wful heart in peace,
For he is caught up in another lease;[9]

[1] For her list—because she pleased. [2] Lite—little. [3] Kind—nature. [4] Thirled—pierced. [5] Waped—stupefied. [6] Sith—times. [7] Swith—quickly. [8] Kithe—acknowledge. [9] Lease—net.

Right as him list he laugheth at my pain,
And I ne can mine hearté not restrain
For to love him yet alway ne'ertheless,[1]
And of all this I n'ot[1] to whom to plain. 195

And should I plain, alas the hardé stound![2]
Unto my foe that gave mine heart a wound,
And yet desireth that mine harm be more?
Now certés farther will I never fond[3]
None other help my sorés for to sound,[4]
My Destiny hath shapéd so full yore,
I will no other medicine ne lore,
I will be aye there I was onés bound :—
That I have said, be said for evermore. 204

Alas! where is become your gentleness,
Your wordés full of pleasánce and humbleness,
Your óbservance in so low a mannere,
Your awaiting, and eke your business
On me, that ye then calléd your mistress,
Your sovereign lady in this worldé here?
Alas! is there now neither word ne cheer
Ye vouchsafen upon mine heaviness?
Alas! your love I buy it all too dear! 213

Now certés, sweet Arcité! though that ye
Thus causéless the rueful cause ybe
Of all my pine and deadly adversity,
Your manly reason ought it to respite
To slay your sothfast[5] friend, and namely me,
Which that have never yet in no degree
Offended you in aught, as wisly[6] he
That all things wot, of woe my soulé quite.[7] 221

But for I was so plain to thee Arcite
In all my words and workés much and lite,
And was so busy aye you to delight,
(Mine honour only save) meek, kind, and free,
Therefore, Arcite, ye put in me this wite :[8]
Alas! alas! ye recken[9] not a mite
Though that the piercing sword of sorrow bite
My woful heart thorough your cruelty. 229

My sweeté foe! why do ye so for shame?
And thinken ye that farthered be your name
To loven anew and be untrué aye,
And putten you in slander now and blame,
And do to me adversity and grame[10]

[1] N'ot—ne wot, know not. [2] Harde stound—hard case. [3] Fond—seek for, endeavour. [4] Sound—make whole, cure. [5] Sothfast—firmly true. [6] Wisly—truly. [7] Quite—requite. [8] Wite—blame. [9] Recken—care. [10] Grame—grief.

That love you most, God thou wot'st alway?
Yet turn again, and yet be plain some day,
And then shall this that now is miss be game,
And all forgiven whilés I live may. 238

Lo, hearté mine! all this is for to sain,
As whether shall I pray or ellés plain?
Which is the way to do you to be true?
For either must I have you in my chain,
Or with the death ye must depart us twain,
There be none other mean ne wayés new,
For God so wisly[1] on my soulé rue
As verily ye slay me with the pain,
That may ye see unfeignéd on my hue. 247

For thus farforth have I my death ysought,
Myself I murder with my privy thought;
For sorrow' and ruth of your unkindéness
I weep, I wail, I fast; all helpeth naught;
I void all joy that is to speak of aught,
I void all company, I fly gladness:
Who may avaunt her bet[2] of heaviness
Than I? and to this plight have ye me brought
Withouten guilt; me needeth no witness. 256

And should I pray and waiven womanhead?[3]
Nay, rather death than do so foul a deed;
And ask mercý and guiltéless? what need?
And if that I complain what life I lead
You recketh not, that know I out of drede;[4]
And if I unto you mine oathés bid
For mine excuse, a scorn shall be my meed;[5]
Your cheer yflowreth but it will not seed;
Full long ago I might have taken heed: 265

For though I had you to-morrow again,
I might as well hold Aprilis from rain
As holden you to maken you steadfást:
Almighty God! of truth the sovéreign,
Where is the truth of man? who hath it slain?
She that them loveth, shall them find as fast,
As in a tempest is a rotten mast.
Is that a tame beast that is ever fain[6]
To run away when he is least aghast? 274

Now mercy, sweet Arcite! if I missay;
Whether have I aught said out of the way

[1] Wisly—truly. [2] Bet—better. [3] Waiven womanhead—put off my womanhood. [4] Drede—doubt. [5] Meed—reward. [6] Fain—glad.

I n'ot;[1] my wit is wasted all away:
I fare as doth the song of chantépleur,[2]
For now I plain[3] and now again I play;
I am so maséd that I dey, I dey;[4]
Arcite, Arcite, hath borne away the key
Of all my weal and my good áventure: 282

For in this world there ne is no creature
Walking, alas! in more discomfiture
Than I, ne that more sorrow doth endure:
For if I sleep a furlong way or tway,
Then thinketh me anon that your figúre
Suppliant before me stant clad in azúre,
Ready eft[5] to profer a new assure[6]
For to be true, and mercy me to pray. 290

The longé night this wonder sight I drie,[7]
That on the day for such affray I die;
And of all this right naught iwis ye retch;[8]
Ne nevermore mine eyen two be dry;
And to your ruth and to your truth I cry,
But welaway! too far be they to fetch
Thus holdeth me my destiny a wretch;
But me to rede[9] out of this drede or gye[10]
Ne may my wit (so weak is it) not stretch. 299

Then end I thus, sith I may do no more,
I give it up for now and evermore,
For I shall never eft[5] putten in balánce
My sikerness,[11] ne learn of love the lore,
But as the swan, I have heard say full yore,[12]
Against his death will sing in his penánce,
So sing I here the destiny and chance
How that Arcite Annelida so sore
Hath thrilléd with the point of rémembrance." 308

When that Annelida, this woful queen,
Hath of her hand ywritten in this wise,
With face all dead, betwixen pale and green,
She fell a swoon, and sith[13] she 'gan to rise,
And unto Mars avoweth sacrifice
Within the temple, with a sorrówful cheer,
That shapen was as ye may plainly hear. 315

[1] N'ot—ne wot, know not. [2] Chantepleur, *chant et pleur*—singing and weeping at the same time. [3] Plain—complain. [4] I dey—I am so bewildered that I die! I die! [5] Eft—afterwards. [6] Assure—assurance. [7] Drie—endure, suffer. [8] Iwis ye retch—truly you heed. [9] Rede—counsel. [10] Drede or gye—but to advise or conduct me out of this doubt. [11] Sikerness—safety. [12] Full yore—long ago. [13] Sith—afterwards.

"And after that within a while I sié
* * * *
Of men of armés coming such a rout,
As all men on earth had been assembled."—l. 194.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance upon the green grass, the which being ended they all kneel down and do honour to the daisy, some to the Flower and some to the Leaf: afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this; they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure; but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, with out regard of worldly respects.

WHEN that Phœbus his chair of gold so high
Had whirléd up the starry sky aloft,
And in the Bull was enter'd certainly,
When show'rés sote[1] of rain descended soft,
Causing the ground felé[2] times and oft
Up for to give many a wholesome air,
And every plainé was yclothéd fair 7

[1] Sote— sweet. [2] Fele—many.

With newé green, and maketh smallé flow'rs
To springen here and there in field and mead,
So very good and wholesome be the show'rs,
That they renewen that was old and dead
In winter time, and out of every seed
Springeth the herbé, so that every wight
Of this seasón waxeth right glad and light; 14

And I so gladé of the season sweet,
Was happed thus; upon a certain night
As I lay in my bed, sleep full unmeet[1]
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest I ne wist, for there n'as[2] earthly wight
(As I suppose) had more of heartés ease
Than I, for I n'ad[3] sickness nor disease; 21

Wherefore I marvel greatly of myself
That I so long withouten sleepé lay,
And up I rose three hourés after twelfe,
About the springing of the gladsome day,
And on I put my gear and mine array,
And to a pleasant grove I 'gan to pass
Long ere the brighté sun uprisen was; 28

In which were oakés great, straight as a line,
Under the which the grass so fresh of hue
Was newly sprung, and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well from his fellow grew,
With branches broad laden with leavés new,
That sprungen out against the sunné sheen,[4]
Some very red, and some a glad light green, 35

Which (as me thought) was a right pleasant sight;
And eke the birdés songés for to hear
Would have rejoicéd any earthly wight,
And I, that could not yet in no mannere
Hearen the nightingale of all the year,
Full busily hark'ned with heart and ear
If I her voice perceive could any where: 42

And at the last a path of little brede[5]
I found, that greatly had not uséd be,
For it forgrowen was with grass and weed,
That well unnethés[6] a wight might it see.
Thought I, this path some whither go'th pardie;
And so I followed till it me brought
To a right pleasant arbour well ywrought, 49

[1] Unmeet — unfitting, unwelcome. [2] N'as — ne was, was not. [3] N'ad — ne had, had not. [4] Sheen — shining. [5] Brede — breadth. [6] Unnethes — scarcely.

Which that benchéd was, and with turvés new
Freshly turvéd, whereof the greené grass
So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hue,
That most like to green wool wot I it was;
The hedge also, that yeden[1] in compass,
And closed in allé the green arbere,[2]
With sycamore was set and eglantere 56

Within, in fere[3] so well and cunningly,
That every branch and leaf grew by measúre
Plain as a board, of a height by and by:[4]
I saw nevér a thing (I you insure)
So well ydone, for he that took the cure[5]
It for to make (I trow) did all his pain
To make it pass all those that men have seen. 63

And shapen was this arbour roof and all
As is a pretty parlour, and also
The hedge as thick as is a castle wall,
That who that list without to stand or go,
Though he would all day pryen to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might 70

Perceive all those that yeden[1] there without
Into the field, that was on every side
Cover'd with corn and grass, that out of doubt
Though one would seeken all the worldé wide,
So rich a fieldé could nót be espied
Upon no cost, as of the quantity,
For of allé good thing there was plenty. 77

And I, that all these pleasant sightés see,
Thought suddenly I felt so sweet an air
Of the eglantere, that certainly
There is no heart I deem in such despair,
Ne yet with thoughtés froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it should soon have bote[6]
If it had onés felt this savour sote.[7] 84

And as I stood and cast aside mine eye,
I was 'ware of the fairest medlar tree
That ever yet in all my life I see,
As full of blossomés as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leaping prettily
From bough to bough, and as him list he eat
Here and there of buddés and flow'rés sweet. 91

[1] Yeden — went. [2] Arbere — arbour. [3] In fere — together. [4] By and by — close to each other. [5] Cure — care. [6] Bote — help, remedy. [7] Sote — sweet.

And to the arbour side was adjoining
This fairest tree of which I have you told,
And at the last the bird began to sing,
When he had eaten what he eaten would,
So passing sweetly that by many fold
It was more pleasant than I could devise.
And when his song was ended in this wise, 98

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answeréd him, that all the wood yrung
So suddenly, that as it were a sot[1]
I stood astonied, and was with the song
Thorough ravíshéd, that till late and long
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,
Again methought she sung e'en by mine ear. 105

Wherefore I waited[2] about busily
On every side if I her might see,
And at the last I 'gan full well espy
Where she sat in a fresh green laurel tree,
On the farther side even right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglantere full well: 112

Whereof I had so inly great pleasire,
As methought I surely ravíshéd was
Into Paradise, wherein my desire
Was for to be, and no farther to pass
As for that day, and on the soté[3] grass
I sat me down, for as for mine intent
The birdés song was more convenient 119

And more pleasant to me by many fold
Than meat or drink, or any other thing;
Thereto the arbour was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
That, as I deeméd, sith the beginning
Of the world was never seen ere then
So pleasant a ground of none earthly man. 126

And as I sat the birdés hearkening thus,
Methought that I heard voices suddenly,
The most sweetest and most delicióus
That ever any wight I trow truely
Hearden in their life, for the harmony
And sweet accord was in so good musick,
That the voices to angels most were like. 133

[1] Sot, Fr. — a stupefied person, a fool. [2] Waited — watched.
[3] Sote—sweet.

At the last out of a grove even by,
(That was right goodly and pleasánt to sight)
I saw where there came singing lustily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Their beauty great lieth not in my might,
Nor their array; nevertheless I shall
Tell you a part, though I speak not of all. 140

In surcoats[1] white of velvet well fitting
They weren clad, and the seamés each one,
As it weren a manner garnishing,
Was set with emeraudés one and one
By and by,[2] but many a riché stone
Was set on the purfilés[3] out of doubt
Of colours, sleeves, and trainés, round about; 147

As of great pearlés round and orient,
And diamondés fine and rubies red,
And many other stone of which I went[4]
The namés now; and evereach on her head
A rich fret of gold, which withouten drede[5]
Was full of statély rich stonés set,
And evéry lady had a chapélet[6] 154

On their headés of branches fresh and green,
So well ywrought, and so marvelously,
That it was a right noble sight to seen,
Some of laurel, and some full pleasantly
Had chapélets of woodbind, and sadly[7]
Some of agnus castus wore also,
Chaplets fresh; but there were many of tho[8] 161

That dancéd and eke sung full soberly,
But all they yede[9] in manner of compáss:
But one there yede in mid the company
Sole by herself; but all follow'd the pace
That she kept, whose heavenly figúréd face
So pleasant was, and her well shap'd persón,
That of beauty she pass'd them evereachone, 168

And more richly beseen by manyfold
She was also in every manner thing,
Upon her head full pleasant to behold
A coroun of gold, rich for any king,
A branch of agnus castus eke bearing
In her hand, and to my sight truély
She lady was of all the company. 175

[1] Surcoat—upper garment, kirtle. [2] By and by—close together. [3] Purfiles—wrought edges. [4] Went—for want (a rhythmical convenience). [5] Drede—doubt. [6] Chapelet—wreath. [7] Sadly—carefully. [8] Tho—those. [9] Yede—went.

And she began a roundel lustily,
That "*Sus le foyle de vert moy*" men call
"*Sine et mon joly cœur est endormy;*"
And then the company answeréd all
With voices sweet entuned and so small,
That methought it the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life sothly.[1] 182

And thus they all came dancing and singing
Into the middés of the mead eachone
Before the arbour where I was sitting:
And God wot I thought I was well begone,
For then I might avise[2] them one by one
Who fairest was, who best could dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing. 189

They had not dancéd but a little throw,[3]
When that I heard not far off suddenly
So great a noise of thundering trumpets blow,
As though it should have departed the sky,
And after that within a while I sie[4]
From the same grove where the ladies came out
Of men of armés coming such a rout, 196

As all men on earth had been assembled,
On that place well horséd for the nonés,[5]
Stirring so fast that all the earth trembled;
But for to speak of riches and stonés,
And men and horse, I trow the largé wonés[6]
Of Prester John, ne all his treasury,
Might not unneth[7] have bought the tenth party. 203

Of their array whoso list to hear more
I shall rehearse so as I can a lite,[8]
Out of the grove that I spake of before,
I saw come first, all in their clôakés white,
A company that wore for their delight
Chapélets fresh of oakés serial[9]
But newly sprung, and trumpets wore they all: 210

On every trump hanging a broad bannere
Of fine tartarium,[10] full richly bete:[11]
Every trumpet his lordés armés bear
About their neckés, with great pearlés set,
Collarés broad, for cost they would not let,[12]
As it would seem, for their scutcheons eachone
Were set about with many a precious stone. 217

[1] Sothly—truely. [2] Avise—consider. [3] Throw—time. [4] Sie—saw. [5] For the nones—for the occasion. [6] Wones—stores. [7] Unneth—scarcely. [8] A lite—a little, shortly. [9] Serial—several, divers. [10] Tartarium—a fine silk. [11] Bete—wrought, prepared. [12] Let—spare.

Their horses' harness was all white also;
And after them next in one company
Camen kings at armés and no mo,
In cloakés of white cloth with gold richly,
Chaplets of greené on their heads on high,
The crownés that they on their 'scutcheons bare
Were set with pearl, and ruby, and saphere, 224

And eke great diamondés many one;
But all their horse-harness and other gear
Was in a suit according evereachone,
As ye have heard the foresaid trumpets were,
And by seeming they were nothing to lere,[1]
And their guiding they did so mannerly;
And after them came a great company 231

Of heraldés and poursuivantés eke,
Arrayéd in clothés of white velvet,
And hardily[2] they were nothing to seek
How they on them shoulden the harness set,
And every man had on a chapélet,
'Scutcheonés and eke horse-harness in deed
They had in suite[3] of them that 'fore them yede.[4] 238

Next after these appear in armour bright,
All save their headés, seemly knightés nine,
And every clasp and nail, as to my sight,
Of their harness were of red gold so fine,
With cloth of gold, and furréd with ermine,
Were the tappourés[5] of their steedés strong,
Both wide and large, that to the ground did hong. 245

And every boss of bridle and peytrel[6]
That they had on was worth, as I would ween,[7]
A thousand pound; and on their headés well
Dresséd were crownés of the laurel green,
The best ymade that ever I had seen:
And every knight had after him riding
Three henchmen[8] still upon him awaiting. 252

Of which every first, on a short truncheon
His lordés helmet bore so richly dight,
That the worst of them was worth the ransóm
Of any king; the second, a shield bright
Bare at his back; the third baren upright
A mighty spear, full sharp yground and keen,
And evéry child wore of leavés green 259

[1] Nothing to lere—they had nothing to learn; they were fully skilled. [2] Hardily—certainly. [3] In suite—after the same fashion, uniformly. [4] Vede—went. [5] Tappoures—trappings. [6] Peytrel- a horse's breast-plate. [7] Ween—guess. [8] Henchmen—pages.

A fresh chaplet upon his hairés bright;
And cloakés white of fine velvet they ware,
Their steedés trappéd and arrayéd right,
Withouten difference as their lordés were;
And after them on many' a fresh courser
There came of armed knightés such a rout,
That they bespread the largé field about. 266

And all they waren, after their degrees,
Chappélets new, or made of laurel green,
Or some of oak, or some of other trees,
Some in their handés barén boughes sheen,[1]
Some of laurir, and some of oakés been,
Some of hawthorn, and some of the woodbind,
And many more which I have not in mind. 273

And so they came their horses freshly stirring
With bloody sounés of their trumpets loud.
There saw I many' an uncouth[2] disguising
In the array of thilké knightés proud;
And at the last as evenly as they could,
They took their place in middés of the mead,
And every knight turnéd his horse's head 280

To his fellów, and lightly laid a spear
Into the rest, and so joustés began
On ev'ry part abouten here and there:
Some brake his spear, some threw down horse and man;
About the field astray the steedés ran;
And to behold their rule and governance,
I you ensure it was a great pleasánce. 287

And so the joustés last an hour and more,
But those that crownéd were in laurel green
Did win the prize; their dintés[3] were so sore
That there was none against them might sustain;
And the jousting all was left off clean;
And from their horse the nine alight anon,
And so did all the remnant evereachone, 294

And forth they yede[4] together twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Towárd the ladies on the greené plain,
That sung and dancéd, as I said now right;
The ladies as soon as they goodly might,
They braken off both the song and dance,
And yede[4] to meet them with full glad semblánce. 301

[1] Sheen — shining. [2] Uncouth — rare, uncommon. [3] Dintes — strokes. [4] Yede—went.

And every lady took full womanly
By the hand a knight, and so forth they yede[1]
Unto a fair laurel that stood fast by,
With leavés laid, the boughés of great brede;[2]
And to my doom[3] there never was indeed
A man that had seen half so fair a tree,
For underneath it there might well have be 308

A hundred persons at their own pleasánce
Shadowéd from the heat of Phœbus bright,
So that they shoulden have felt no grievánce
Neither for rain, nor hail, that them hurt might:
The savour eke rejoice would any wight
That had been sick or melancholious,
It was so very good and virtuous. 315

And with great rev'rence they inclinéd low
Unto the tree so sote[4] and fair of hue,
And after that within a little throw,[5]
They all began to sing and dance of new;[6]
Some sung of love, some plaining of untrue,
Environing the tree that stood upright:
And ever yede[1] a lady and a knight. 322

And at the last I cast mine eye aside,
And was 'ware of a lusty[7] company
That came roaming out of the fieldé wide;
And hand in hand a knight and a ladý,
The ladies all in surcoatés, that richly
Purfiléd[8] were with many a rich stone,
And every knight of green wore mantles on, 329

Embroider'd well, so as the surcoats were:
And evereach had a chapelet on her head,
(Which did right well upon the shining hair)
Makéd of goodly flowrés white and red.
The knightés eke that they in handé led
In suite[9] of them wore chaplets evereachone.
And before them went minstrels many one, 336

As harpés, pipés, lutés, and psalt'ry,
Allé in green, and on their headés bare,
Of diverse flowrés made full craftily,
All in a suit, goodly chaplets they ware.
And so dancing into the mead they fare,
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All overspread with flow'rés in compass; 343

[1] Yede—went. [2] Brede—breadth. [3] Doom—judgment. [4] Sote—sweet. [5] Throw—time. [6] Of new, Fr. idiom, *de nouveau*—again. [7] Lusty—pleasant. [8] Purfiled—wrought, embroidered. [9] In suite—uniformly.

Whereto they inclinéd evereachone
With greaté rev'rence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there then began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret[1] in praising the daisy;
For, as methought, among her notés sweet
She said, "*Si douce est la Margarete!*" 350

Then they allé answered her in fere[2]
So passingly well and so pleasántly,
That it was a most blissful noise to hear:—
But I n'ot[3] how it happéd, suddenly
As about noon the sun so fervently
Wax'd hoté that the pretty tender flow'rs
Had lost the beauty of their fresh colóurs. 357

Forshrunk[4] with heat the ladies eke to-brent,[5]
That they ne wist[6] where they them might bestow,
The knightés swelt,[7] for lack of shade nigh shent,[8]
And after that, within a little throw,[9]
The wind began so sturdily to blow
That down go'th all the flow'rés evereachone,
So that in all the mead there left not one, 364

Save such as succour'd were among the leaves
From every storm that mighté them assail,
Growing under the hedges and thick greves:[10]
And after that there came a storm of hail
And rain in fere,[2] so that withouten fail
The ladies ne the knightés n' had one thread
Dry on them, so dropping wet was their weed. 371

And when the storm was cleané pass'd away,
Those in the white, that stood under the tree,
They felt nothíng of all the great affray
That they in green without had in ybe;[11]
To them they yede[12] for ruth and for pity,
Them to comfórt after their great disease,[13]
So fain they were the helpless for to ease. 378

Then I was 'ware how one of them in green
Had on a coroun rich and well-fitting,
Wherefore I deeméd well she was a queen,
And those in green on her were awaiting.
The ladies then in white that were coming

[1] Bargaret, Fr. *Bergerette*—a pastoral song. [2] In fere—together, in chorus. [3] N'ot—ne wot, know not. [4] Forshrunk—much shrunk. [5] To-brent—burnt. [6] Ne wist—knew not. [7] Swelt—fainted with heat, sweltered. [8] Shent—overcome. [9] Throw—time. [10] Greves—groves. [11] Had in ybe—had been in. [12] Yede—went. [13] Disease—discomfort.

Towardés them, and the knightés in fere,[1]
Began to comfort them and make them cheer. 385

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Took by the hand the queen that was in green,
And saidé; "Sister, I have great pity
Of your annoy and of your troublous tene,[2]
Wherein ye and your company have been
So long, alas! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the ease 392

In all the pleasure that I can or may."
Whereof that other, humbly as she might,
Thankéd her; for in right evil array
She was with storm and heat I you behight;[3]
And evéry lady then anon right
That were in white one of them took in green
By the hand, which when the knights had seen, 399

In like manner each of them took a knight
Clad in the green, and forth with them they fare
Unto a hedge, where that they anon right
To maken these joustés they would not spare
Boughs to hew down and eke trees to square,
Wherewith they made them stately firés great
To dry their clothés, that were wringing wet. 406

And after that of herbés that there grew
They made for blisters of the sunné brenning[4]
Ointmentés very good, wholesome and new,
Where that they yede[5] the sick fast anointing;
And after that they yede about gath'ring
Pleasánt salladés, which they made them eat
For to refresh their great unkindly heat. 413

The lady of the Leaf then 'gan to pray
Her of the Flow'r (for so to my seeming
They should be calléd as by their array)
To sup with her, and eke for any thing,
That she should with her all her people bring,
And she again in right goodly mannére
Thanketh her fast of her most friendly cheer; 420

Saying plainély that she would obey
With all her heart all her commandément:
And then anon without longer delay,
The lady of the Leaf hath one ysent
To bring a palfrey after her intent,
Arrayéd well in fair harnéss of gold,
For nothing lackéd that to him 'long should. 427

[1] In fere — together. [2] Tene — affliction. [3] Behight — assure.
[4] Brenning—burning. [5] Yede—went.

And after that to all her company
She made to purvey horse and every thing
That they needed, and then full hastily,
Even by the harbour where I was sitting,
They passed all, so merrily singing
That it would have comfórted any wight :
But then I saw a passing wonder sight, 434

For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurel sat, and did her might
The whole servíce to sing 'longing to May,
All suddenly began to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Leaf forthright
She flew, and set her on her hand softlý,
Which was a thing I marvell'd at greatly. 441

The goldfinch eke, that from the medlar tree
Was fled for heat unto the bushes cold,
Unto the lady of the Flow'r 'gan flee,
And on her hand he set him as he would,
And pleasantly his wingés 'gan to fold,
And for to sing they peine [1] them both as sore
As they had done of all the day before. 448

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
And all the rout of knightés eke in fére ; [2]
And I that had seen all this wonder case [3]
Thought that I would essay in some mannere
To know fully the truth of this mattere,
And what they were that rode so pleasantly :
And when they were the arbour passed by, 455

I drest me [4] forth, and happed meet anon
A right fair lady, I do you ensure ;
And she came riding by herself alone,
Allé in white, with semblance full demure ;
I her salu'd, bade her good áventure
Might her befall, as I could most humbly ;
And she answér'd ; "My daughter, gramercy !" 462

"Madáme, quod I, if that I durst enquere
Of you, I would fain of that company
Wit [5] what they be that pass'd by this arbere."
And she again answeréd right friendly ;
"My daughter', all those that passéd heréby
In white clothing be servants evereachone
Unto the Leaf, and I myself am one. 469

[1] Peine them—exert themselves. [2] In fere—together. [3] Case, Fr. *cas*—chance, event. [4] Drest me repaired. [5] Wit—know.

"See ye not her that crownéd is, quod she,
Allé in white?"—"Madáme, then quod I, Yes."
"That is Dián, goddess of Chastity,
And for because that she a maiden is,
Into her hand the branch she beareth this
That agnus castus men call properly;
And all the ladies in her company 476

Which ye see of that herbé chaplets wear,
Be such as have alway kept maidenhede,[1]
And all they that of laurel chaplets bear
Be such as hardy were in manly deed,
Victorious, name which never may be dead,
And all they were so worthy of their hand
In their time that no one might them withstand. 483

And those that wear chapélets on their head
Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne deed,
But aye steadfást, ne for pleasánce ne fear,
Though that they should their heartés all to-tear,
Would never flit, but ever were steadfást
Till that their livés there asunder brast." 490

"Now, fair Madáme! quod I, yet would I pray
Your ladyship (if that it mighten be)
That I might know by some mannér of way,
Sithen that it hath liked your beauty
The truth of these ladies for to tell me,
What that these knightés be in rich armóur,
And what those be in green and wear the Flow'r; 497

"And why that some did rev'rence to the tree,
And some unto the plot of flow'rés fair?"
"With right good will, my daughter fair! quod she,
Sith[2] your desire is good and debonaire.
Those niné crown'd be very éxemplaire
Of all honóur 'longing to chivalry,
And those certáin be clept[3] 'The Nine Worthy,' 504

"Which that ye may see riding all before,
That in their time did many' a noble deed,
And for their worthiness full oft have bore
The crown of laurel leavés on their head,
As ye may in your oldé bookés read;
And how that he that was a conqueror
Had by laurel alway his most honóur: 511

[1] Maidenhede—maidenly virtue. [2] Sith—since. [3] Clept—called.

"And those that bearen boughés in their hand
Of the precious laurél so notáble,
Be such as were (I will ye understand)
Most noble Knightés of the Round Table;
And eke the Douzépeerés[1] honourable,
Which they bear in the sign of victory,
As witness of their deedés mightily: 518

"Eke there be Knightés old of the Garter,
That in their timés did right worthily,
And the honóur they did to the laurir
Is, for[2] by it they have their laud wholly,
Their triumph eke and martial glory,
Which unto them is more perfect riches
Than any wight imagine can or guess: 525

"For one Leaf given of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
(An it be done so as it ought to be)
Is more honóur than any thing earthly;
Witness of Rome, that founder was truly
Of all knighthood and deedés marvellous,
Record I take of Titus Livius. 532

"And as for her that crownéd is in green,
It is Flora, of these flow'rés goddess;
And all that here on her awaiting been,
It are such folk that lovéd idleness,
And not delight in no kind business
But for to hunt, and hawk, and play in meads,
And many other such like idle deeds. 539

"And for the great delight and the pleasánce
They have to the Flow'r, and so reverently
They unto it do such obeísance,
As ye may see."—"Now, fair Madáme! quod I,
(If I durst ask) what is the cause and why
That knightés have the ensign of honóur
Rather by the Leaf than by the Flow'r?" 546

"Sothly,[3] daughter, quod she, this is the truth,
For knightés e'er should be persévering
To seek honóur without feintise[4] or sloth,

[1] Douzepeeres — twelve peers. *See note.* [2] For — because. [3] Sothly—truly. [4] Feintise—feigning.

V. 516. *Douzepeeres.*] Fr. *Douze Pairs.* The twelve peers of France; an order supposed to have been instituted by Charlemagne. Spenser, in his *Faery Queen*, b. iii. canto x. st. 31, alludes to the same order:

"Big looking, like a doughty *Douzépeer.*"

From well to better in all manner thing;
In sign of which with leavés aye lasting
They be rewarded after their degree,
Whose lusty [1] green may not appaired be,[2] 553

"But aye keeping their beauty fresh and green;
For there is no stormé that may them deface,
Ne hail nor snow, ne wind nor frostés keen,
Wherefore they have this property and grace:
And for [3] the Flow'r within a little space
Willen be lost, so simple of natúre
They be, that they no grievance may endure: 560

"And every storm will blow them soon away,
Nor they last not but for a seasón,
That is the cause (the very truth to say)
That they may not by no way of reasón
Be put to no such occupatión."
"Madáme, quod I, with all my whole servíce,
I thank you now in my most humble wise; 567

"For now I am ascértain'd thoroughly
Of ev'ry thing that I desir'd to know."
"I am right glad that I have said, sothlý,
Aught to your pleasure, (if ye will me trow)[4]
Quod she again. But to whom do ye owe
Your service, and which willen ye honóur
(Pray tell me) this year, the Leafé or the Flow'r?" 574

"Madáme, quod I, although I least worthy,
Unto the Leaf I owe mine óbservance."
"That is, quod she, right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour you advance,
And keep you from the wicked rémembrance
Of Malébouche[5] and all his cruelty,
And all that good and well-condition'd be; 581

"For here I may no longer now abide,
But I must follow the great company
That ye may see yonder before you ride."
And forthwith as I could most humily[6],
I took my leave of her, and she 'gan hie[7]
After them as fast as e'er she might,
And I drew homeward, for it was nigh night, 588

And put all that I had seen in writing,
Under support of them that lust it read.[8]
O little book! thou art so unconning,[9]

[1] Lusty — pleasant. [2] Appaired — impaired, injured. [3] For — because. [4] Trow—believe. [5] Malebouche—evil speaking. [6] Humily — humbly. [7] Hie — hasten. [8] Lust it read — desire to read it. [9] Unconning—simple, unwise.

How dar'st thou put thyself in press for dread?
It is wonder that thou waxest not red,
Sith that thou wot'st full lite[1] who shall behold
Thy rude languáge, full boistously unfold.[2] 595

[1] Lite—little. [2] Boistously unfold—roughly displayed.

CHAUCER'S DREAM.

This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt, the king's son, with Blanch the daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, who after long love (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end by consent of friends happily married, figured by a bird bringing in her bill a herb which restored them to life again. Here also is showed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who although she was a stranger, was notwithstanding so well liked and loved of the Lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them.—*Urry.*

WHEN Flora, the queen of Pleasánce,
Had whole achiev'd th' obeýsánce
Of the fresh and new seasón
Throughout every región,
And with her mantle wholé coveréd, 5
That winter madé had discoveréd; [1]
Of áventure,[2] withouten light,
In May I lay upon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the Lord that her ywrought, 10
Could well entail[3] in imagery,
And showéd had great mastery,
When he in so littl' a space
Made such a body and a face,
So great beautý with such featúres, 15
More than in other creätures;
And in my thoughtés as I lay
Within a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forést,
Where after hunting I took rest, 20
Natúre and kind[4] so in me wrought,
That half on sleep they me ybrought,
And 'gan to dream to my thinking
With mind of knowledge like making,

[1] Made had discover'd—that which winter had caused to be discovered, or laid bare. [2] Of aventure—by chance. [3] Entail—fashion, shape. [4] Kind—synonymous with nature.

Chaucer's Dream.] Never before the year 1597 printed; that which heretofore hath gone under the name of his Dream, is *The Book of the Duchess*, or, *The Death of Blanch, Duchess of Lancaster.*

For what I dreaméd, as me thought, 25
I saw it, and I slepten naught;
Wherefore is yet my full believe
That some good spirit that ilké eve,
By meané of some curious port,[1]
Bare me where I saw pain and sport; 30
But whether it were I woke or slept,
Well wot I oft I laugh'd and wept;
Wherefore I will in rémembránce
Put whole the pain and the pleasánce,
Which was to me axen[2] and heal; 35
Would God ye wist it every deal,[3]
Or at the least ye might one night
Of such another have a sight,
Although it were to you a pain,
Yet on the mo'row ye would be fain,[4] 40
And wish that it might long endure;
Then might ye say ye had good cure:
For he that dreams and weens he see
Muchel the better, yet may he
Ywit what, and of whom, and where, 45
And eke the less it will hinder
To think, I see this with mine e'en,
Iwis this may not dreamé ken,[5]
But sign or a signifiánce
Of hasty thing souning pleasánce:[6] 50
For on this wise upon a night,
As ye have heard, withouten light,
Not all waking ne full on sleep,
About such hour as lovers weep
And cry after their ladies grace, 55
Befell me then this wonder case,[7]
Which ye shall hear, and all the wise,
So wholly as I can devise:[8]
In plain English evil written,
For sleepy writer, well ye witten[9] 60
Excuséd is, though he do miss,
More than one which that waking is;
Wherefore here of your gentleness
I you require my boistousness[10]
Ye letten pass as thingé rude, 65
And heareth what I will conclude,

[1] Port—conveyance. [2] Axen—axes; plural of the Fr. n. *accès*,—fever, ailment. [3] Wist it every deal—knew every particular of it. [4] Fain—glad. [5] Dreame ken—this indeed may seem to be a dream. [6] Souning pleasance — consonant, or, according with pleasure. [7] Case—event. [8] Devise—describe. [9] Witten—know. [10] Boistousness—roughness, rudeness.

And of th' enditing take no heed,
Nor of the terms, so God you speed,
But let all pass as nothing were;
For thus befell, as you shall hear. 70

* * * * *

[The following is the description of the dead Prince and Princess.]

'They' bare the dead prince to the barge,
And naméd them should have the charge;
And to the hearse where lay the queen
The remnant went, and down on kneen,
Holding their hands, on high 'gan cry, 75
Mercy, mercy! evéreach thrie,[1]
And curs'd the time that ever sloth [2]
Should have such masterdom of truth,
And to the barge a longé mile
They bare her forth, and in a while 80
Allé the ladies, one and one,
By companies were brought each one,
And past the sea and took the land,
And in new hearses on a sand,
Put and brought weren all anon 85
Unto a city clos'd with stone,
Where it yhad been uséd aye
The kingés of the land to lay,
After they reignéd in honóurs,
And writ was which were conquerors, 90
In an abbey of nunnés black,
Which accustom'd were to wake,
And of uságe rise each a night
To pray for every livés wight:
And so befell, as is the guise, 95
Ordain'd and said was the servíce
Of the prince and eke of the queen
So devoutly as might ybeen,
And after that about the hearses
Full many orisons and verses 100
Withouten note[3] full softély
Said were, and that full heartily,
That all the night till it was day,
The people in the church can pray
Unto the holy Trinity 105
Of those soulés to have pity.
And when the night ypast and run
Was, and the newé day begun,

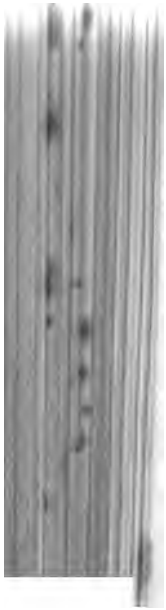
[1] Thrie—thrice. [2] Sloth—tardiness, delay. [3] Withouten note—without song.

The young morrów with rayés red,
Which from the sun o'er all can spread, 110
Attemper'd clearé was and fair,
And made a time of wholesome air,
Befell a wonder case and strange
Among the people, and 'gan change
Soon the word, and evéry woe 115
Unto a joy, and some to two;
A bird all feather'd blue and green,
With bright rays like gold between,
As small thread over every joint,
All full of colour strange and coint,[1] 120
Uncouth,[2] and wonderful to sight,
Upon the queenés hearse gone light,
And sung full low and softély
Three songés in her harmony,
Unletted[3] of evéry wight, 125
Till at the last an aged knight,
Which seeméd a man in great thought,
Like as he set all thing at naught,
With visage and eyen all forwept,[4]
And pale, as a man long unslept, 130
By the hearses as he stood
With hasty handling of his hood
Unto a prince that by him pass'd,
Ymade the bird somewhat aghast,
Wherefore she rose and left her song, 135
And départed from us among,
And spread her wingés for to pass,
By the place where he enter'd was,
And in his haste, shortly to tell,
Him hurt, that backward down he fell 140
From a window richly ypaint
With lives of many divers saint,
And beat his wingés and bled fast,
And of the hurt thus died and pass'd,
And lay there well an hour and more, 145
Till at the last of birds a score
Came and assembled at the place
Where the window ybroken was,
And made such waimentatión
That pity was to hear the soun, 150
And the warbles of their throatés
And the cómplaint of their notés,
Which from joy clean ywas reverséd,
And of them one the glass soon piercéd,

[1] Coint — quaint, neat, trim. [2] Uncouth — rare, uncommon.
[3] Unletted—unprevented. [4] Forwept—much wept.

And in his beak, of colours nine, 155
A herb he brought, flow'rless, all green,
All full of smallé leaves and plain,
Swart, and long with many a vein,
And where his fellow lay thus dead
This herb he down laid by his head, 160
And dresséd it full softély,
And hung his head and stood thereby;
Which herb in less than half an hour
'Gan o'er all knit, and after flow'r
Full out, and waxen ripe the seed: 165
And right as one another feed
Would, in his beak he took the grain,
And in his fellow's beak certáin
It put, and thus within the third
Up stood, and prunéd him the bird 170
Which dead had been in all our sight,
And both together forth their flight
Took, singing from us, and their leave
Was none disturb them would, ne grieve.[1]
And when they parted were and gone 175
Th' abbéss the seedés soon eachone
Gathered had, and in her hand
The herb she took, well ávisand[2]
The leaf, the seed, the stalk, the flower,
And said it had a good savóur, 180
And was no common herb to find,
And well approv'd of uncouth[3] kind,
And than other more virtuous;
Whoso have it might, for to use[4]
In his need, flow'r, or leaf, or grain, 185
Of their heal might ybe certáin:—
And laid it down upon the hearse
Where lay the queen, and 'gan rehearse
Each one to other that they had seen;
And taling[5] thus, the seed wax'd green, 190
And on the dry hearse 'gan to spring,
Which me thought was a wondrous thing;—
And after that flow'r and new seed,
Of which the people all took heed,
And said it was some great mirácle, 195
Or medicine fine, more than triácle,[6]

[1] Grieve — perplex, annoy. [2] Avisand — observing, examining. [3] Uncouth—uncommon, rare. [4] For to use—he that in his need might have it to use, whether flower, leaf, or grain, might be certain of recovering his health. [5] Taling thus—thus relating their tales to each other. [6] Triacle, Fr. *thériaque*—a general medicine, specific.



And were so sorr
That long of weep
For of their lord t
Unto them was su
That for to live th
So were they very
And after this the
Of the grain 'gan
Three, with her fi
And in the queene
One after other ea
She put them and
Which showéd so
That provéd was t
For with a smiling
The queene uprose
As she was wont t
She made good ch
The people kneelin
Thought they in h
And to the prince
They went to make
And when the quee
And how the medi
She prayéd she mi
To relieve him fro
Which she and he
And to him went a
That straight withi
Lusty and fresh on

And come and askéd cause and why
They rungen were so statély?
And after that the queen, th' abbess, 245
Made diligence ere they would cease,
Such that of ladies soon a rout
Suing[1] the queen was all about,
And call'd by name each one and told,
Was none forgotten young ne old. 250
There mighten men see joyés new
When the medicine fine and true
Thus restor'd had every wight,
So well the queené as the knight,
Unto full perfect joy and heal, 255
That fleeting they were in such weal,
As folk that woulden in no wise
Desire more perfect paradise.
And thus when passéd was the sorrow,
With muchel joy soon on the morrow, 260
The king, the queen, and every lord,
With all the ladies, by one accord
Held a general assembly:
Great cry was made through the country,
The which aftér as their intent, 265
Was turnéd to a parliament,
Where was ordainéd and adviséd
Evéry thing and well deviséd
That pleasen might to most and least;
And there concluded was the feast 270
Within the isle for to behold
With full consent of young and old,
All in the same wise as before,
As thing should be withouten more,
And they shipp'd and thither went, 275
And into strangé realmés sent,
To kingés, queenés, and duchésses,
To divers princes and princesses,
Of their lín'áge, and can them pray
That it might like them at that day 280
Of marriage, for their disport,
Come see the isle and them disport,
Where should be joustés and tourneys,
And armés done in other ways;
Signifying o'er all the day 285
After Aprilis within May.
And was advis'd that ladies twain,
Of good estate and well beseen,

[1] Suing—following.

With certain knightés and squiérs,
And of the queenés officers, 290
In manner of an embassade,
With certain letters clos'd and made,
Should take the bargé and depart,
And seek my lady every part
Till they her found, for any thing 295
Both charged have the queen and king;
And as their lady and mistress
Her to beseech of gentleness
At the day there for to been,
And oft her recommend the queen, 300
And prayés for all loves to haste,
For, but[1] she come, all will be waste,
And the feast but a business
Withouten joy or lustiness;
And took them tokens, and good speed 305
Pray'd God send them after their need.
Forth went the ladies and the knights,
And were out fourteen days and nights,
And brought my lady in their barge,
And had well sped and done their charge; 310
Whereof the queen so heart'ly glad
Was, that in soth such joy she had
When that the ship approachéd land
That she my lady on the sand
Met, and in armés so constrain, 315
That wonder was behold them twain,
Which to my dome[2] during twelve hours
Neither for heat nor wat'ry show'rs
Departed not no company
Saving themself, but none them by, 320
But gave them leisure at their ease
To rehearsen joy and disease,
After the pleasure and couráges[3]
Of their young and tender ages.
And after, with many a knight, 325
Brought they were, where'as for that night
They parted not, for to pleasánce
Content was heart and countenance
Both of the queen and my mistress,
This was that night their business; 330
And on the morrow with huge rout
This prince of lordés him about
Came, and unto my lady said,
Of her coming glad and well paid[4]

[1] But—unless. [2] Dome—judgment. [3] Courages—spirit, inclination. [4] Paid—pleased.

He was, and full right cunningly[1] 335
Her thankéd and full heartily,
And laugh'd and smiled. and said, Ywis,[2]
That[3] was in doubt, in safety is;
And cómmanded do diligence,
And spare for neither gold ne 'spence, 340
But make readý, for on the morrow,
Ywedded, with Saint John to borrow,[4]
He would ybe withouten more,
And let them wite this less and more.[5]
The morrow came, and the servíce 345
Of marriage in such a wise
Ysaid was, that with more honóur
Was never prince ne conqueror
Ywed, ne with such company
Of gentleness in chivalry, 350
Ne of ladies so great routs,
Ne so beseen as all abouts
They weren there, I certify
You on my life, withouten lie.
And the feast held was in tentés, 355
As to tell you mine intent is,
In a room in largé plain,
Under a wood in a champain,
Betwixt a river and a well,
Where never had abbey ne cell 360
Ybeen, ne kirk, house, ne villáge,
In time of any mannés age,
And duréd three moneths the feast
In one estate, and never ceas'd
From early rising of the sun 365
Till the day spent was and yrun
In jousting, dancing, lustiness,[6]
And all that sounéd to gentleness.[7]
And as me thought the second morrow,
When ended was all oldé sorrow, 370
And in surety evéry wight
Had with his lady slept a night,
The prince, the queen, and all the rest,
Unto my lady made request,
And her besought often and prayéd 375
To mewards to be well apayéd,[8]

[1] Cunningly — skilfully, adroitly, with ability. [2] Ywis — truly. [3] That—that (which) was in doubt. [4] St. John to borrow—St. John being security; an ancient asseveration. [5] Less and more—*i. e.* let all know this. [6] Lustiness—pleasure. [7] Souned to gentleness—consonant with gentleness. [8] Apayed—satisfied, pleased.

And consider mine oldé truth,
And on my painés haven ruth,
And me accept to her servíce
In such formé and in such wise 380
That we both mighten be as one;
Thus pray'd the queen and evereachone;
And, for there should ne be no nay,[1]
They stinten[2] jousting all a day
To pray my lady, and requere 385
To be content and out of fear,
And with good heart make friendly cheer,
And said it was a happy year;
At which she smil'd, and said, "Ywis[3]
I trow well he my servant is, 390
And would my welfare, as I trist,
So would I his, and would he wist[4]
How, and I knewé that his truth
Continue would, withouten sloth,
And be such as ye here report, 395
Restraining both courage and sport,
I could consent at your request
To be ynaméd of your feast,
And doen after your usánce
In obeying of your pleasánce. 400
At your request this I consent,
To pleasen you in your intent:
And eke the sovéreign above,
Commanded hath me for to love,
And before other him prefer, 405
Against which prince may be no wer;[5]
For his pow'r o'er all reigneth,
That other would for naught him paineth;
And sith[6] his will and your's is one,
Contráry in me shall be none:" 410
Then, as me thoughten the promíse
Of marriáge before the messe[7]
Desired was of every wight
To be maden the samé night,
To put away all manner doubts 415
Of every wight thereabouts;
And so was done: and on the morrow,
When every thought and every sorrow
Dislodgéd was out of mine heart
With every woe and every smart, 420

[1] No nay—in order that there should be no denial. [2] Stinten—ceased. [3] Ywis—truly. [4] Wist—knew. [5] Wer—war, strife. [6] Sith—since. [7] Messe—the service of mass.

Unto a tent prince and princess
Methought brought me and my mistréss,
And said we weren at full age
There to conclude our marriáge,
With ladies, knightés, and squiérs, 425
And a great host of ministers,
With instruments and sounds diverse,
That long weren here to rehearse;
Which tent was church parochial,
Ordainéd was in special 430
For the feast and for the sacre,[1]
Where archbishop and archdiacre[2]
Ysungen full out the servíce
After the custom and the guise
And holy church's ordinance. 435
And after that to dine and dance
Brought were we, and to divers plays,
And for our speedé each wight prays,
And merry was both most and least,
And said amended was the feast 440
And were right glad lady and lord
Of the marriage and th' accord,
And wishéd us heartés pleásance,
In joy and heal continuance;
And to the minstrels made request 445
That in increasing of the feast
They woulden touchen their cordés,
And with some new joyeux accordés[3]
Ymove the people to gladness,
And praiden of all gentleness 450
Each to pain them[4] for the day
To show his cunning and his play.
Then began sounés marvelous,
Entuned with accords joyous,
Round about and in all the tents, 455
With thousandés of instruments,
That every wight to dance them painéd;[4]
To be merry was none that feignéd;
Which sound me troubled in my sleep,
That from my bed anon I leap,[5] 460
Weening to have been at the feast,
But when I woke all was yceas'd;
For there n'as[6] lady ne creature,
Save on the walls old portraiture

[1] The sacre—the sacrament (of marriage). [2] Archdiacre—archdeacon. [3] Joyeux accordes—joyous harmonies. [4] Pain them—exert themselves. [5] Leap—leaped. [6] N'as—was not.

Of horsemen, hawkés, and hounds, 465
And hurt deer allé full of wounds;
Some like bitten, some hurt with shot,
And, as my Dream, seem'd that was not.

* * * * *

Lo, here my bliss! lo, here my pain!
Which to my lady' I do complain, 470
And grace and mercy her requere
To end my woe and busy fear,
And me accept to her servíce,
And to her service in such wise,
That of my Dreamé the substance 475
Might turnen once to cognisance,
And cognisance to very preve,[1]
By full consent and by good leave;
Or else withouten more, I pray
That this same night ere it be day 480
I may unto my Dream return,
And sleeping so forth aye sojourn
Abouten the isle of pleasánce
Under my lady's obeisánce,
In her servíce; and in such wise 485
As it please her may to devise,[2]
And gracé once to be accept
Like as I dreaméd when I slept,
And dure a thousand years and ten
In her good will. Amen, Amen! 490

L' ENVOY.

Fairest of fair, and goodliest on live!
All my secret to you I plain and shrive,[3]
Requiring grace, and of my sore complaint
To be beheal'd or martyr'd as a saint,
For by my truth I swear, and by this book,
Ye may both heal and slay me with a look. 496

Go forth, mine owné true heart innocent,
And with humbleness do thine observance,
And to thy lady on thy knees present
Thy service new, and think how great pleasánce
It is to live under the obeisance
Of her which that may with her lookés soft
Give thee the bliss that thou desirest oft. 503

Be diligent, awake, obey, and dread,
And be not too wild of thy countenance,

[1] Preve—proof. [2] Devise—as it may please her to ordain. [3] Plain and shrive—lament and confess.

But meek and glad, and thy natúre yfeed
To do each thing that may her do pleasánce ;
When thou shalt sleep have aye in rémembrance
Th' imáge of her which may with lookés soft
Give thee the bliss that thou desirest oft. 510

And if so be that thou her namé find
Written in book, or ellés upon wall,
Look that thou do, as servant true and kind,
Thine obeisance as she were there withal :
Feigning in love is breeding of a fall
From the gracé of her whose lookés soft
May give thee bliss that thou desirest oft. 517

Ye which that this ballád yreaden shall
I pray you that you keep you from the fall.

THE COMPLAINT OF

THE BLACK KNIGHT.

The heavy Complaint of a Knight for that he cannot win his Lady's grace: supposed to be John of Gaunt.

IN May, when Flora the fresh lusty queen
The soil had clad in green, and red, and white,
And Phœbus 'gan to shed his streamés sheen[1]
Amid the Bull with all the beamés bright,
And Lucifer to chase away the night,
Against the morrow our orison[2] hath take
To bid all lovers out of sleep awake, 7

And heartés heavy for to recomfórt
From drearihead of heavy nightés sorrow,
Nature bade them rise, and them disport
Against the goodly and the glad grey morrow,
And Hope also, with Saint John to borrow,[3]
Bade in despite of danger and despair
For to taken the wholesome lusty[4] air; 14

And with a sigh I 'gan for to abraid[5]
Out of my slumber', and suddenly up start,
As he (alas) that nigh for sorrow dey'd,[6]
My sickéness sat aye so nigh my heart,
But for to finden succour of my smart,
Or at the least some rélease of my pain,
That me so sore yheld in every vein. 21

I rose anon, and thought I wouldé gone
Into the wood to hear the birdés sing
When that the misty vapour was agone,
And clear and fair ywas the morrowning,
The dew also like silver in shining
Upon the leavés, as any balmé sweet,
Till fiery Titan with his persant heat 28

Sheen—shining. [2] Orison hath take—we have said our morning prayer. [3] St. John to borrow — with St. John for our pledge. [4] Lusty—pleasant. [5] Abraid—awake. [6] Dey'd—died.

Had dryéd up the lusty liquor new
Upon the herbés in the greené mead,
And that the flow'rés of many divers hue
Upon their stalkés gonen for to spread,
And for to splay out their leaves in brede[1]
Against the sun, gold burnéd in his sphere,
That down to them ycast his beamés clear. 35

And by a river forth I 'gan coasty
Of water clear as beryl or crystal,
Till at the last I found a little way
Towárd a park, encloséd with a wall,
In compass round, and by a gaté small;
Who so that would, he freely mighten gone
Into this park, ywalléd with green stone: 42

And in I went to hear the birdés' song,
Which on the branches both in plain and vale
So loud ysang that all the wood yrung
Like as it should shiver in pieces smale,[2]
And as methoughten that the nightingale
With so great might her voice began out wrest
Right as her heart for love would all to-brest.[3] 49

The soil was plain and smooth, and wonder soft,
All overspread with tapites[4] that Natúre
Had made herself, cover'd eke aloft
With boughés green, the flow'rés for to cure,[5]
That in their beauty they may long endure
From all assault of Phœbus' fervent fere,[6]
Which in his sphere so hot yshone and clear. 56

The air attempre,[7] and the smoothé wind
Of Zephyrus among the blossoms white
So wholesome was and nourishing by kind,[8]
That smallé buddés and round blossoms lite[9]
In manner 'gan of her breath to delight,
To give us hope that their fruit shall ytake
Against autumn ready for to shake. 63

I saw the Daphne closed under rind,
With the green laurer and the wholesome pine,
The myrrh also, that weepeth ever' of kind,[10]
The cedars high, as upright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowé doth incline
Her boughés green unto the earth adown
Unto her knight calléd Demophoön. 70

[1] In brede — abroad. [2] Smale — small. [3] To-brest — break. [4] Tapites — tapestries. [5] Cure — take care of, preserve. [6] Fere — fire. [7] Attempre — temperate. [8] By kind — naturally. [9] Lite — small. [10] Of kind—naturally.

There saw I growing eke the fresh hawthorn
In white motley, that so soté[1] doth ysmell,
Ash, fir, and oak, with many a young acorn,
And many a tree more than I can tell,
And me before I saw a little well,[2]
That had his course, as I could well behold,
Under a hill, with quické streams and cold, 77

The gravel gold, the water pure as glass,
The bankés round the well environing,
And soft as velvet was the youngé grass
That thereupon lustily[3] came springing,
The suite[4] of trees abouten compassing
Their shadow cast, closing the well around,
And all the herbés growing on the ground. 84

The water was so wholesome and so virtuous,
Through might of herbés growing it beside,
Not like to the well whereas Narcissus
Islain was through the vengeance of Cupíde,
Where so wonder covertly he did hide
The grain of death upon each fatal brink
That death must follow who that ever drink; 91

Nor like unto the pit of Pegacé
Under Parnassus, where poetés slept,
Nor like to the well of puré chastity
Which that Diana with her nymphés kept,
When she naked into the water leapt,
That slew Actæon with her handés fell,
Only for he came so nigh the well: 98

But this well which that I now here rehearse
So wholesome was that it woulden assuage
Wightés bollen[5] heartés, and the venom pierce
Of Pensifhead,[6] withal the cruel rage;
And over more refreshen the viságe
Of them that were in any weariness
Of great labóur, or fallen in distress. 105

And I that had through danger and disdain
So dry[7] a thirst, thought that I would essay
To tasten a draught of this well or twain,
My bitter languor if it might allay,
And on the bank anon me down I lay,
And with mine head unto the well I raught,[8]
And of the water drank I a good draught, 112

[1] Sote—sweet. [2] Well—spring. [3] Lustily—agreeably. [4] Suite—succession. [5] Bollen—swollen; to take up a tree with a *boll* of earth, is still a common expression in the country. [6] Pensifhead—sadness. [7] Dry—severe, raging. [8] Raught—reached.

Whereof methought I was refreshéd well
Of the burning that sate so nigh my heart,
That verily anon I 'gan to feel
A hugé part releaséd of my smart,
And therewithal anon up I astart,
And thought that I would walken and see more
Forth in the park and in the holtés hoar.[1] 119

And thorough a laundé[2] as I yede[3] apace,
And 'gan abouten fast for to behold,
I found anon a delectáble place
That was beset with treés young and old,
Whose namés here for me shall not be told,
Amid of which there stood an arbour green
That benchéd was with colours new and clean. 126

This arbour was all full of flow'rés gend,[4]
Into the which as I behold began,
Betwixt a hulfere[5] and a woodé bend,
As I was 'ware, I saw where lay a man
In black, and of white colour pale and wan,
And wonder deadly also of his hue,
Of hurtés green and freshé woundés new. 133

[This was the "Black Knight,"—in other words the poet's patron and friend, the Duke of Lancaster, whose lamentation on account of his mistress's cruelty is considerably more diffuse than interesting. The foregoing extract, which forms the opening of the poem, is an example of Chaucer's power in describing, and of his thorough and unaffected delight in rural scenery. It was indeed, to all appearance, his ruling passion.]

[1] Holtes hoar—old, hoary forests. [2] Launde—plain. [3] Yede—went. [4] Gend—pretty. [5] Hulfere—holly.

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS;

OR,

THE DREAM OF CHAUCER.

In the dream a mourning Knight sitting under an oak is found by a hunting Duke of Lancaster greatly lamenting the death of one whom he sorrowfully supposed to be Blanch the Duchess — —

I have great wonder, by this light,
How that I live, for day ne night
I may not sleepen well-nigh naught:
I have so many an ydle thought
Purely for the defaute of sleep, 5
That to my wit I take no keep[1]
Of nothing new it cometh or go'th,
Nor me is nothing lefe[2] nor loth:
All is alike good to me
Joy or sorrow where so it be, 10
For I have feeling in no thing,
But as it were a mased[3] thing
Al day I poure[4] to fall adown,
For sorrowful imagination
Is away wholly in my mind. 15
And wel ye wot that against kind[5]
It were to liven in this wise,
For Nature ne would not suffice
A creature earthly creature
Not longe time to endure 20
Without sleep and be in sorrow,
And I ne may ne night ne morrow
Sleepen, and this melancholy
And dread I haven for to die:
Defaute of sleep and heaviness 25
Hath slain my spirit of quickness,[6]

[1] Keep—care. [2] Lefe—pleasant. [3] Mased—confused, bewildered. [4] To poure—study. [5] Kind—nature. [6] Quickness—life.

That I have lost all lustihead ;[1]
Such fantasies be in mine head
So I n'ot[2] what is best to do :
But men might asken me why so 30
I may not sleep, and what me is ?
  But nathéless who asketh this
Loseth his asking truély ;
My selven cannot tellen why
The soth, but truly, as I guess 35
I hold it be a sickéness
That I have suffer'd this eight year,
And yet my bote is ne'er the near,[3]
For there is physician but one
That may me heal ; but that is done ; 40
Passen we over until eft ;[4]
That[5] will not be, must needs be left :
Our first matter is good to keep.
  So when I saw I might not sleep
Till now of late this other night, 45
Upon my bed I sat upright,
And bade one reachen me a book,
A romancé, and it me took
To read, and drive the night away ;
For why ? methought it better play, 50
Than play either at chess or tables.[6]
  And in this book were written fables
That clerkés had in oldé time
And other poets put in rhyme
To read, and for to be in mind, 55
While men lovéd the law of kind :[7]
This book ne spake but of such things
Of queenés livés and of kings,
And many other thingés smale ;
Among all this I found a tale 60
Which that me thought a wonder thing.

* * * * *

[This story is the old classic Legend of Ceyx and Alcyone. After the reading of which, he falls asleep ; and, according to his usual custom, dreams.]

  Me thoughten thus, that it was May,
And in the dawning there[8] I lay
Me met[9] thus in my bed all naked,
And lookéd forth, for I was waked

[1] Lustihead—pleasure. [2] N'ot—know not. [3] Ne'er the near—my remedy is never the nearer. [4] Eft—hereafter. [5] That—that which, or what. [6] Tables—the old name for the game now known, as *back-gammon*. [7] Kind — nature. [8] There — where. [9] Met — dreamed.

With smallé fowlés a great heap, 65
That had affray'd me' out of my sleep
Through noise and sweetness of their song;
And as me met[1] they sat among
Upon my chamber roof without,
Upon the tiles o'er all about, 70
And evéreach sungé in his wise
The most sweet and solémn servíce
By note that ever man I trow
Had heard, for some of them sang low,
Some high, and all of one accord: 75
To tellen shortly, at one word,
Was never heard so sweet a steven,[2]
But it had been a thing of heaven,
So merry a sound, so sweet entunés,
That certés, for the town of Tewnés,[3] 80
I n'old[4] but I had heard them sing;
For all my chamber 'gan to ring
Through singing of their harmony;
For instrument nor melody
Was no where heard yet half so sweet, 85
Nor of accordé half so meet,[5]
For there was none of them that feignéd
To sing, for each of them him painéd
To find out many crafty notes,
They ne ysparéd not their throats; 90
And, soth to say, my chamber was
Full well depainted, and with glass
Were all the windows well yglazéd
Full clear, and not a hole ycrased,[6]
That to behold it was great joy, 95
For wholly all the story' of Troy
Was in the glazing ywrought thus,
Of Hector and King Priamus,
Achilles and King Lamedon,
And eke Medea and Jason, 100
Of Paris, Helen and Lavine;
And all the walls with colours fine
Were painted, bothé text and glose[7]
And all the Romant of the Rose.
My windows weren shut each one, 105
And through the glass the sun yshone
Upon my bed with bright beamés,
With many glad gildy streamés;

[1] Met—dreamed. [2] Steven—noise. [3] Tewnes—qu? Tunis. [4] N'old—would not. [5] Meet of accord—in unison well together. [6] Ycrased. Fr. *écrasé*—broken. [7] Glose—glossary, explanation.

And eke the welkin was so fair,
Blue, bright, and clear, ywas the air, 110
And full attemper',[1] in soth it was,
For neither cold ne hot it was,
Ne' in all the welkin was no cloud.
  And as I lay thus, wonder loud
Me thought I heard a hunter blow 115
T' essay his great horn, and to know
Whether' it was clear or hoarse of soun;
  And I heard going up and down
Men, horses, hounds, and other thing,
And all men speaken of hunting, 120
How they would slay the hart with strength,
And how the hart had upon length
So much enbosed,[2] I n'ot now what.
  Anon right when I hearden that,
How that they would on hunting gone, 125
I was right glad, and up anon
I took my horse, and forth I went
Out of chamber; I never stent[3]
Till come to the field without,
There overtook I a great rout 130
Of hunters and of foresters,
And many relays and limers,[4]
That hied them to the forest fast,
And I with them: so at the last
I askéd one lad, a limer, 135
"Say, fellow, who shall hunten here?"
(Quod I); and he answer'd again,
"Sir, the Emperor Octavian,
(Quod he) and he is here fast by."
"A goddés half,[5] in good time, quod I, 140
Then go we fast;" and gan to ride:
When we came to the forest side,
Evéry man ydid right soon
As unto hunting fell to done.
  The master hunt[6] anon foot-hot,[7] 145
With his clear horn yblew threemote[8]
At the uncoupling of his houndés.
Within a while the harté found is:
I hallooed and rechaséd[9] fast
A long time: and so at the last 150

[1] Attemper—temperate. [2] Enbosed—Fr. *embosqué*—hidden in a wood. [3] Stent—stayed. [4] Relays and limers—fresh sets of hounds and blood-hounds. Limer, from the Fr. *limier*—layer of snares. [5] A godde's half—by God's favour. [6] Master hunt—chief huntsman. [7] Foot-hot—in haste. [8] Threemote—a technical term for a peculiar blast on the horn. [9] Rechased—also a term in hunting.

This harté rous'd and stole away
From all the hounds a privy way.
  The hounds had overshot him all,
And were on a default yfall,
Therewith the hunt full wonder fast 155
Yblew a forloin [1] at the last:
I was go walkéd from my tree,[2]
And as I went there came by me
A whelp, that fawn'd me as I stood,
That had follów'd and could no good ;[3] 160
It came and crept to me as low,
Right as it had me well yknow,
Held down his head and join'd his ears,
And laid all smooth adown his hairs.
  I would have caught it up anon ; 165
It fled, and was from me agone :
As I follów'd and it forth went,
Down by a flow'ry green it went
Full thick of grass, full soft and sweet,
With flow'rés fele [4] fare [5] under feet, 170
And little us'd, it seeméd thus,
For bothé Flora and Zephyrus,
They two that maken flow'rés grow,
Had made their dwelling there I trow,
For it was one for to behold [6] 175
As though the earth there envy would
To be gayer than is the heaven,
To haven more flow'rés such seven
As in the welkin starrés be,
It had forgot the poverty 180
Of Winter, through his coldé morrows
That made it suffer, and his sorrows
All was forgotten, and that was seen,
For all the wood was waxen green,
Sweetness of dew had made it wax. 185
  It is no need eke for to axe
Whe'r there were many greené greves,[7]
Or thick of trees so full of leaves,
And every tree stood by him selve
From other well ten foot or twelve, 190
So great trees and so huge of strength,
Of forty' or fifty fathom length,

[1] Forloin—a note on the horn signifying that the game is at a distance. [2] Tree—wood. [3] Could no good—was able to achieve no good deed. [4] Fele—many. [5] Fare—spring, grow. [6] For to behold—to look upon. [7] Greves—groves.

All clean withouten bough or stick,
With croppes [1] broad, and eke as thick,
They weren not an inch asunder, 195
That it was shade over all under.[2]
And many' a hart and many' a hind
Was both before me and behind,
Of fawnés, sowers,[3] buckés, does,
Was full the wood, and many roes, 200
And many squirrelés that sat
Full high upon the trees and ate,
And in their manner maden feastés :

* * * * *

But forth I roam'd right wonder fast
Down through the wood; so at the last 205
I was 'ware of a man in black,
That sate, and had yturn'd his back
Unto an oak, a hugé tree;
Lord! then thought I, who may that be?
What aileth him to sitten here? 210
And anon right I went him near;
Then found I sit even upright
A wonder fair welfaring knight;
By the manner me thoughten so
Of good muchel, right young thereto, 215
Of th' age of four-and-twenty year,
Upon his beard but little hair,
And he was clothéd all in black;
I stalkéd even unto his back;
And there I stood as still as aught,[4] 220
The soth to say he saw me not;
For why? he hung his head adown,
And with a deadly sorrówful soun
He made of rhyme ten verses[5] or twelve
Of a complaint unto himselve, 225
The mosté pity' and the most ruth
That e'er I heard, for by truth
It was great wonder that Natúre
Might suffer any creáture
To have such sorrow' and he not dead; 230
Full piteous, pale, and nothing red,
He said a lay (a manner song) [6]
Withouten note, withouten song,
And was this, for full well I can
Rehearse it; right thus it began: 235

[1] Croppes — tops. [2] All under — that underneath was all overshadowed. [3] Sowers—sores, bucks in their fourth year. [4] Aught--anything. [5] Verses—this is to be pronounced as a monosyllable, according with the French plural, *vers*. [6] Manner song—a sort of song.

"I have of sorrow so great won,[1]
That joy ne get I never none,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have lov'd with all my might,
Is from me dead, and is agone, 240
And thus in sorrow, left me alone:
Alas! O Death! what aileth thee
That thou n'oldést[2] have taken me
When that thou took my lady sweet?
Of all goodness she had no mete,[3] 245
That was so fair, so fresh, so free,[4]
So good, that men may well ysee."
When he had made thus his complaint
His sorrowful hearté 'gan fast faint,
And his spirités woxen dead, 250
The blood was fled for puré dread
Down to his heart.

* * * * *

Anon therewith, when I saw this,
He far'd thus evil there he seat,[5]
I went and stood right at his feet, 255
And gret[6] him, but he spake right naught,
But argued with his owné thought,
And in his wit disputed fast
Both why and how his life might last,
Him thought his sorrows were so smart, 260
And lay so cold upon his heart.

* * * * *

But at the last to say right soth,[7]
He was 'ware of me how I stood
Before him, and did off my hood, 265
And had gret[6] him as I best could
Debonairly and nothing loud;
He said; "I pray thee be not wroth,
I heard thee not, to say the soth,
Ne I saw thee not, Sir, truély." 270

* * * * *

[The poet then inquires the cause of his great sorrow; upon which the knight relates his story as follows:—]

"Sir, (quod he) sithen first I couth[8]
Have any manner wit from youth.
Or kindély[9] understanding
To comprehend in any thing

[1] So great won—I am so intimate with sorrow. [2] N'oldest—would'st not. [3] Mete—mate. [4] Free—bountiful. [5] There he seat—where he was seated. [6] Gret—greeted. [7] Soth—true. [8] I couth—since first I knew any sort of wit from my youth. [9] Kindely—natural.

What love was in mine owné wit, 275
Dredéless [1] I have ever yet
Been tributary and giv'n rent
To Love wholly, with good intent,
And through pleasánce become his thrall [2]
With good will, body, heart, and all; 280
All this I put in his servág̃e
As to my lord, and did homáge;
And full devoutly' I pray'd him tho [3]
He should beset mine hearté so
That it pleasánce unto him were 285
And worship to my lady dear.
"And this was long and many' a year
Ere that mine heart was set one where [4]
That I did thus, and ne wist why,
I trow it came me kindély; [5] 290
Paraunter [6] I was thereto most able,
As a white wall or a table,
For 'tis ready to catch and take
All that men willen therin make,
Whether men will portray or paint 295
Be the workés ne'er so quaint.[7]
"And thilké time I far'd right so,
I was able t' have learned tho,
And to have could [8] as well or better
Paraunter [6] either art or letter; 300
But for [9] love came first in my thought,
Therefore I ne forgot it not;
I chose love to be my first craft,
And therefore it is with me laft; [10]
For why? I took' it out of so young age, 305
That malice ne had my courág̃e; [11]
Not that time turnéd to nothing
Thorough too muchel knowledging,
For that time Youth my misteress
Governed me in idleness, 310
For it was in my firsté youth,
And though full little good I couth,[12]
For all my workés were flitting
That time, and all my thought varying,
All things were to me alike good, 315
That knew I then, but thus it stood:

[1] Dredeless — doubtless. [2] Thrall — slave. [3] Tho — then. [4] Set one where—fixed on any object. [5] Kindely—naturally. [6] Paraunter—a corruption of peradventure. [7] Quaint—strange. [8] Could—known. [9] For—because. [10] Laft—left. [11] My courage—that ill disposition did not possess my mind. [12] Couth—knew.

"It happed that I came on a day
Into a place there that I sey[1]
Truly the fairest company
Of ladies that e'er man with eye 320
Had seen together in one place;
Shall I clepe it happé either grace[2]
That brought me there? naught but Fortúne,
That is to lien full commune;[3]
The falsé traitoress perverse, 325
God would that I could clepe[4] her worse,
For now she worketh me full woe,
And I will tell thee soon why so.
"Amongst these ladies thus each one,
The soth to sayen, I saw one, 330
That ne was like none of the rout,
For I dare swear, withouten doubt,
That as the summer's sunné bright
Is fairer, clearer, and hath more light
Than any other planet in heaven, 335
The mooné or the starrés seven,
For all the world right so had she,
Surmounten them all of beautý,
Of manner, and of comeliness,
Of stature, and well-set gladness, 340
Of goodlihead,[5] and so well besey,[6]
Shortly, what shall I more ysay?
By God and by his hallows[7] twelve,
It was my sweet right all her selve;
She had so steadfast countenance, 345
So noble port and maintenance,
And Love, that well yheard my boon,[8]
Yhad espiéd me thus soon
That she fell sooné in my thought;
As help me God so was I caught 350
So suddenly, that I ne took
No manner counsel but at her look
And at mine heart; for why? her eyen
So gladly I trow mine hearté seen,
That purely then mine owné thought 355
Said it were bet serve her for naught
Than with another to be well;
And it was soth,[9] for every deal[10]

[1] There that I sey—where I saw. [2] Happe either grace—chance or favour. [3] Lien full commune—that is commonly prone to deceive. [4] Clepe—call. [5] Goodlihead—goodness. [6] Besey—beseem. [7] Hallows—saints. [8] Boon—petition. [9] Soth—truth. [10] Every deal—wholly, in every particular.

I will anon right tell thee why :
" I saw her dance so comély, 360
Carol and sing so sweetély,
And laugh and play so womanly,
And looken so debonairly,
So goodly speak and so friendély,
That certés I trow that evermore 365
N'as[1] seen so blissful a treasóre :—
For every hairé on her head,
The soth to say, it was not red,
Ne neither yellow ne brown it n'as,
Methought most like to gold it was. 370
And whiché eyen my lady had,
Debonaire, good, and glad, and sad,[2]
Simple', of good muchel, not too wide ;
Thereto her look was not aside,
Nor overthwart,[3] but beset so well, 375
It drew and took up everydeal[4]
All which that on her 'gan behold ;
Her eyen seem'd anon she would
Have mercy, Folly weenden so,
But it was ne'er the rather do ;[5] 380
It was no counterfeited thing,
It was her owné pure looking,
Which that the goddess Dame Natúre
Had made them open by measúre
And close, for were she ne'er so glad, 385
Her looking was not foolish spread,[6]
Ne wildély though that she play'd,
But e'er me thought her eyen said,
' By God my wrath is all forgive ; '
Therewith her list so well to live 390
That Dulness was of her adrad ;[7]
She n'as[8] too sober ne too glad ;
In allé thingés more measúre
Ne had nevér I trow creatúre ;
But many' one with her look she hurt, 395
And that sate her full light at heart,
For she knew nothing of their thought ;
But whe'r[9] she knew or knew it not,

[1] N'as—ne was, was not. [2] Sad—steady, not wandering. [3] Overthwart — across. [4] Everydeal — entirely. [5] The rather do — Folly thought so, but it was never the sooner accomplished. (*Rather* is an old word for sooner — earlier ; and *do* is constantly used by Chaucer for done ; especially where it suits the rhyme.) [6] Foolish spread—her looking was not spread into a foolish stare :—the whole of this passage is a finished portrait of a beautiful gentlewoman. [7] Adrad—afraid. [8] N'as—ne was, was not. [9] Whe'r—whether.

Algate[1] she ne' raught of them a stré;[2]
To get her love no near[3] was he 400
That won'd at home, than he in Ind;
The foremost was alway behind;
But good folk over all other
She lov'd as man may his brother,
Of which love she was wonder large[4] 405
In skilful places that bare charge[5]
But which a visage had she thereto!
Alas! my heart is wonder woe
That I ne can descriven it,
Me lacketh both English and wit 410
For to undo it at the full,
And eke my spirits be so dull
So great a thing for to devise;[6]
I have no wit that can suffice
To comprehenden her beauté; 415
But thus much I dare say, that she
Was whité, ruddy, fresh, lifely huéd,
And every day her beauty newéd;[7]
And nigh her face was alderbest,[8]
For certés Nature had such lest[9] 420
To make that fair, that truely she
Was her chief patron of beauty,
And chief example' of all her work
And monster,[10] for be' it ne'er so dark
Me thinketh I see her evermo; 425
And yet moreover, though all tho[11]
That ever lived were now alive,
Ne would they have found to descrive
In all her face a wicked sign,
For it was sad,[12] simple', and benign. 430
"And such a goodly sweeté speech
Yhad that sweet, my livés leech,[13]
So friendély, and so well ygrounded,
Upon reason so well ifounded,
And so treatable[14] to all good, 435
That I dare swear well by the rood,[15]
Of eloquence was never found
So sweet a souning and facónde,[16]

[1] Algate—nevertheless. [2] Ne rought a stre—cared not a straw for them. [3] Near—nearer. [4] Large—bountiful. [5] That bare charge—where there was necessity. [6] Devise—describe. [7] Newed—renewed. [8] Was alderbest—her face was best of all when closely viewed. [9] Lest—delight. [10] Monster—prodigy. [11] Tho—those. [12] Sad—sedate. [13] Leech—my life's physician. [14] Treatable—tractable. [15] Rood—cross. [16] Souning and faconde—so sweet and eloquent an appeal.

Ne truer tonguéd, ne scornéd less,
Ne bet could heal, that by the mass 440
I dursté swear, though the Pope it sung,
That there was ne'er yet through her tongue
Man ne woman greatly harméd;
(As for her, was all harm yhid,)
Ne lessé flattering in her word, 445
That purély her simple recórd
Was found as true as any bond
Or truth of any mannés hond.
"Ne chidé she could never a deal,[1]
That knoweth all the world full well, 450
But such a fairness of a neck
Yhad that sweet, that bone nor breck[2]
N'as there none seen that mis-sat;
It was white, smooth, straight, and puré flat,
Withouten hole or canel[3] bone 455
And by seeming she n' had none.[4]
"Her throat, as I have now memoire
Seem'd as a round tow'r of yvoire,
Of good greatness, and not too great;
And Fairé White ywas she hete,[5] 460
That was my lady's namé right,
And she was thereto fair and bright;
She ne had not her namé wrong:
Right fair shoulders and body long
She had, and armés ever lith,[6] 465
Fattish, fleshy, not great therewith;
Right white handés, and nailés red;
Round breastés; and of a good brede[7]
Her hippés were; a straight flat back,
I knew on her no other lack, 470
That all her limbés n'ere pure suing,[8]
In as far as I had knowing:
Thereto she could so well yplay
What that her list, that I dare say
That she was like to torché bright, 475
That every man may take of light
Enough, and it hath ne'er the less
Of manner and of comeliness.
"Right so faréd my lady dear,
For every wight of her mannere 480

[1] Never a deal—not a whit, in no wise. [2] Breck—bruise. [3] Canel—channel. [4] She n' had none—*i. e.* it seemed as though her neck had no bone in it, being so purely smooth and straight. [5] Was she hete—she was called the Fair White, (Blanch). [6] Lith—flexible. [7] Brede—breadth. [8] N'ere pure suing—did not strictly follow.

Might catch enough if that he would,
If he had eyen her to behold,
For I dare swear well if that she
Had among ten thousand be[1]
She woulden have been at the best 485
A chief mirróur of all the feast,
Though they had standen in a row
To mennés eyen that could have know;[2]
For whe'r so men had play'd or wakéd,[3]
Methought the fellowship as nakéd 490
Withouten her, that I saw once
As a coroun withouten stones;
Truély she was to mine eye
The' solein[4] phœnix of Araby,
For there liveth never but one, 495
Ne such as she ne know I none:
To speak of goodness, truly she
Had as muchel debonairty[5]
As e'er had Esther in the Bible,
And more, if more were possible; 500
And, soth to sayen, therewithal
She had a wit so general,
So whole inclinéd to all good,
That all her wit was set by rood[6]
Without malíce, upon gladness; 505
And thereto' I saw ne'er yet a less
Harmful than she was in doing;—
I say not that she n' had knowing
What harm ywas, or ellés she
Had could[7] no good, so thinketh me; 510
And truly for to speak of truth,
But she had had, it had been ruth,
Thereof she had so much her deal,[8]
And I dare say and swear it well,
That Truth himself o'er all and all 515
Had chose his manor principal
In her, that was his resting place.
Thereto she had the mosté grace
To have steadfást perséverance,
And easy' attemper'd governance, 520
That ever I knew or wisté yet,
So puré suff'rant[9] was her wit;

[1] Be — been. [2] Know — known. [3] Play'd or waked — *i. e.* for whether the company played or watched, I thought it all naked or barren without her. [4] Solein—sole. [5] Debonairty— courtesy, gentleness. [6] Set by rood—measured out. [7] Could—known. [8] Deal —share. [9] Suff'rant was her wit—so purely tolerant in mind was she.

And reason gladly she' understood,
It followed well she couldé good ;[1]
She usédgladly to do well :— 525
These were her manners every deal.[2]
"Therewith she lovéd so well right,
She wrong do woulden to no wight;
No wight ne might do her no shame,
She lov'd so well her owné name. 530
"Her lust to hold no wight in hond;[3]
Ne be thou siker she would not fond[4]
To holden no wight in balánce
By half word ne by countenance,
(But if men would upon her lye,)[5] 535
Ne send men into Walachie,
To Pruise and to Tartary,
To Alexandria nor Turkey,
And bid him fast anon that he
Go hoodless into the dry sea, 540
And come home by the Carrenary;
'And, Sir, be ye now full right 'ware
That I may of you hear men sain
Worship, ere that ye come again.'
"She ne us'd no such knackés smale :[6] 545
But therefore that I tell my tale,
Right on this same, as I have said,
Was wholly all my love ylaid,
For certés she was that sweeté wife,
My suffisance, my lust,[7] my life, 550
My hope, my heal,[8] and all my bliss,
My worldés welfare and my goddess,
And I wholly' hers, and every deal.[2]

* * * * *

"But wherefore that I tellen thee,
When that I first my lady sey[9] 555
I was right young, the soth to say,
And full great need I had to learn,
When that mine hearté woulden yearn :[10]
To love it was a great emprise,
But as my wit would best suffice; 560
After my young and childly wit
Withouten dread I beset it

[1] Coulde good—knew, or could achieve, goodness. [2] Every deal—in all respects. [3] Wight in hond—she delighted not to dally with any one. [4] Would not fond—and be sure that she would not strive. [5] Upon her lye — unless people endeavoured to deceive her. [6] Knackes smale — she resorted to no such petty trifling. [7] My suffisance, my lust — my sufficiency, my delight. [8] Heal—health. [9] Sey—saw. [10] Yearn— earnestly to desire.

To loven her in my besté wise,
To do' her worship and the service
Which that I could then, by my truth, 565
Withouten feigning either[1] sloth,
For wonder fain I would her see;
So muchel it amended me,
That when I sawé her a morrow,
I was warish'd[2] of all my sorrow 570
Of all day after till it were eve:
Me thoughten nothing might me grieve
Were my sorrows ne'er so smart;
And yet she sat so in mine heart
That by my truth I n'oldé not 575
For all this world out of my thought
Yleave my lady; no truly,

* * * * *

"Now have I told thee, soth to say,
My firsté song. Upon a day
I bethought me what muchel woe, 580
And sorrow that I suffer'd tho[3]
For her, and yet she wist[4] it not;
Ne tell her durst I not my thought.—
Alas! thought I, I can no rede,[5]
And but[6] I tell her I' am but dead, 585
And if I tell her, to say soth,
I am adread she will be wroth;
Alas! what shall I then ydo?
In this debate I was so woe,
Methought mine hearté burst atwain, 590
So at the last, soth for to sain,
I bethought me that Dame Natúre
Ne forméd never in creáture
So muchel beauty truély
And bounty withouten mercy. 595
"In hope of that, my tale I told
With sorrow, as that I ne'er should
For needés, and maugre mine head
I must have told her, or be dead.[7]
I n'ot well how that I began,— 600
Full evil rehearsé it I can,
And eke, as help me God withal,
I trow it was in the dismal,

[1] Either—or. [2] Warished—cured. [3] Tho—then. [4] Wist—knew. [5] I can no rede—I am unable to advise. [6] But—unless. [7] Or be dead—I conceive the meaning of the above sentence to be, "with sorrow I told my tale, in a manner that, from the necessity which beset me I never should accomplish my task; yet, in spite of my head, I must have told her, or die in the attempt."

That was the ten woundés[1] of Egypt,
For many' a word I overskipt 605
In telling my tale, for puré fear
Lest that my wordés mis-set were;
With sorrowful heart and woundés dead,
Softly, and quaking for pure dread
And shame, and stinting in my tale 610
For-fear'd,[2] and my hue allé pale;
Full oft I wax'd both pale and red,
Bowing to her I hung the head:
I durst not onés look her on,
For wit, mannere, and all was gone; 615
I said, 'Mercy, sweet!' and no more:
It was no game; it sate me sore.
"So at the last, the soth to sain,
When that my heart was come again,
To tellen shortly all my speech, 620
With whole heart I 'gan her beseech
That she would be my lady sweet,
And swore, and heart'ly 'gan her hete[3]
Ever to be steadfást and true,
And love her alway freshly new, 625
And never other lady have,
And all her worship for to save
As I best could, I sware her this;
'For yours is all that e'er there is,
For evermore, mine hearté sweet! 630
And ne'er to false you, but I mete,[4]
I n'ill, as wis[5] God help me so.'
"And when I had my tale ydo
God wot sh' accounted not a stré
Of all my tale, so thoughten me: 635
To tell shortly, right as it is,
Truly her answer it was this;
I can not now well counterfeit
Her wordés, but this was the great[6]
Of her answer: she sayéd 'Nay, 640
All utterly.' Alas that day
The sorrow' I suffer'd and the woe!

* * * * *

"So it befell an other year
I thought onés I woulden fond[7] 645
To do her know[8] and understond

[1] Woundes—plagues. [2] For-fear'd—greatly alarmed. [3] Hete—promise. [4] But I mete—unless I dream. [5] As wis—as truly, so God help me, I will not. [6] The great—the full purpose. [7] Fond—strive. [8] Do her know—make her know.

My woe; and she well understood
That I ne willned[1] thing but good
And worship, and to keep her name
Over all things, and dread her shame, 650
And was so busy her to serve;
And pity were I shoulden sterve,[2]
Sith that I will'd no harm iwis.[3]
"So when my lady knew all this,
My lady gave me all wholly 655
The noble gift of her mercy,
Saying her worship by all ways;
Dredéless[4] I mean none other ways,
And therewith she gave me a ring,
I trow it was the firsté thing: 660
But if mine hearté was iwax
Glad, that is no need to axe.
"As help me God I was as blive[5]
Yraiséd as from death to live,
Of all happés the alderbest[6] 665
The gladest and the most at rest:
For truély that sweeté wight,
When I had wrong and she the right,
She woulden alway so goodly
Forgive me so debonairly: 670
In all my youth, in allé chance,
She took me in her governance:
Therewith she was alway so true,
Our joy was ever aliké new;
Our heartés were so even a pair, 675
That never was that one contraire
Unto that other for no woe,
For soth alike they suffer'd tho.[7]
"O bliss, and eke O sorrow both!
Alike they were both glad and wroth. 680
All was us one withouten were;[8]
And thus we liv'd full many' a year
So well I can not tellen how."
"Sir, (quod I) and where is she now?"
"Now?" quod he, and ystint[9] anon;— 685
Therewith he wax'd as dead as stone,
And said; "Alas that I was bore!
That was the loss that herebefore
I told thee that I had ylorn.[10]
Bethink thee how I said beforne; 690

[1] Willned—desired. [2] Sterve—die. [3] Iwis—in truth. [4] Dredeless—doubtless. [5] Blive—quickly. [6] The alderbest—the best of all fortunes. [7] Tho—then. [8] Withouten were—every thing was as one between us, without disagreement. [9] Ystint—stopped. [10] Ylorn—lost.

Thou wot'st full little what thou meanest,
For I have lost more than thou weenest.
God wot, alas! right that was she."
"Alas, Sir! how? what may that be?"
"She's dead!"—Nay!—"Yes, by my truth." 695
"Is that your loss?—by God 't is ruth."
And with that wordé right anon
They 'gan to strike forth; all was done
For that timé the hart hunting.
With that me thoughten that this king 700
Began homewardés for to ride
Unto a place was there beside,
Which that was from us but a lite,[1]
A long castle with wallés white,
By Saint John, on a riché hill, 705
As me mett;[2] but thus it befill:
Right thus me mett, as I you tell,
That in the castle there was a bell,
As it had smitten hourés twelve,
And therewith I awoke my selve, 710
And found me lying in my bed,
And the book which that I had read
Of Alcyone and Ceyx the king,
And of the goddés of Sleeping,
I found it in mine hand full even; 715
Thought I, this is so quaint a sweven[3]
That I would by procéss of time
Fond[4] to put this sweven in rhyme
As I can best, and that anon:
This was my sweven, now it's done. 720

[1] Lite — little way. [2] Mett — dreamed. [3] Sweven — dream. [4] Fond—strive.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

The HOUSE OF FAME, like several of Chaucer's compositions, and indeed of many of those written during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is represented under the form of a Dream. The whole poem is in three books, containing in all nearly 2200 lines. It abounds in lively and vigorous description; in disquisitions on natural philosophy, and in sketches of human nature of no common beauty.

After presenting the reader with a literally bare outline of the plot of the poem, we shall collect a few of its prominently beautiful passages.

In the Prologue, comprising 108 lines, Chaucer has brought together various theories respecting the cause of dreams; after which, he "makes invocatión"

> "Unto the god of Sleep anon,
> That dwelleth in a cave of stone,
> Upon a stream that com'th from Lete,
> That is a flood of hell unsweet,
> Beside a fulke[1] men clepe Cimerie;
> There sleepeth aye this god unmerry
> With his sleepy thousand sonnés,
> That alway to sleep their won[2] is."

The first Book is occupied entirely with a description of an imaginary Temple of Venus, constructed of glass; on the walls of which are displayed, in portraitures, the history of Æneas, abridged from the poem of Virgil. Having examined the interior of the building, he desires to survey the territory in which it is situated.

> "When I out of the dooré came
> I fast abouten me beheld:
> Then saw I but a largé field,
> As far as ever I might see,
> Withouten town, or house, or tree,
> Or bush, or grass, or earéd[3] land;
> For all the field was but of sand,
> And small as men may see at eye
> In the desertés of Lybié;

---

[1] Fulke—a hollow place, a vale. [2] Won—habit, custom. [3] Eared—cultivated, arable.

Ne farther no manner creature
That is yformed by Nature,
Ne saw I me to rede or wiss." [1]

After looking around him, he sees aloft, "fast by the sun," a gigantic eagle, which souces down and bears him off in his talons through the upper regions of air. This is the bird of Jove, and being endued with human utterance proceeds to inform him respecting the institution of the "House of Fame."

During his discourse, the wondrous bird ascends higher and higher, and the poet surveys all the regions of the earth. After a still higher progress, he arrives among the celestial signs in the Zodiac. Here his journey ends; "the House of Fame" is before him, and his companion, previously to separation, informs him that the building contains nothing animated, but the unsubstantial shapes of all that has been done or spoken on earth.

The poet proceeds towards the castle, which is situated on a rock of ice, on one side of which he sees engraved the names of persons of all times who were eminent in their day: some of their names, however, are almost illegible from the icy surface having dissolved: but on that side where the rock is overshadowed by the walls of the building, the names are all

"As fresh, as men had written them there
The self day, or that very hour."

The reader cannot fail to admire the happy consistency and beauty of this point in the allegory. The description of the building, its architecture, its myriads of windows,

"Like flakés fallen in great snows;"
Its "Barbicans and pinnacles,
Imág'ries and tabernacles,"

is all as richly fanciful as an Arabian tale.

Having surveyed the exterior, the poet enters the building and beholds the Goddess of Fame seated upon a throne of sculptured carbuncle. Around her was

"the heavenly melody
Of songés full of harmony
I heard about her throne ysung
That all the palace wall yrung!
So sang the mighty Musé, she
That cleped is Caliope,
And her seven sisterné eke,
That in their faces seemen meek,
And ever more eternally
They sang of Fame."

---

[1] Rede or wiss—counsel or instruct.

Before the Goddess appear the various candidates for her favour; and here the poet has admirably described the capricious judgment of the fickle deity, ingeniously making her the sister of Fortune.

> "And some of them [the requests] she granted soon
> And some she warned well and fair,[1]
> And some she granted the contraire
> Of their asking all utterly:—
> But this I say you truely,
> What that her grace was[2] I ne wist;
> For of these folk full well I wist
> They had good Famé each deservéd,
> Although they were diversely servéd."

Upon proceeding to award judgment to her petitioners, the Goddess despatches a message to the God of the Winds—Æolus, who brings with him two trumpets; the one golden, which dispenses high praise; the other of brass, black and foul, blowing slander. Hereupon various companies appear before the throne and receive judgment according to their qualities and pretensions.

Not perfectly satisfied with what he had seen (for he knew before that all men are desirous of some sort of fame) the poet applies to a stranger to instruct him where he may gain information of all the novelties that are transpiring; of tidings

> "Of Love, or of such thingés glad:"

whereupon he is led to the "House of Tidings," a marvellous structure, fashioned like a cage, and formed of many-coloured twigs. It is circular, is sixty miles in diameter; and the entrances to it are as numerous as the leaves on trees, with numberless holes pierced in the roof that the sounds may issue forth. The building also circulates with an inconceivably swift motion, so that the visitor is unable to obtain admittance. While he is in this dilemma he perceives, seated upon a high stone, his old friend the eagle, who again takes him up in his talons and conveys him into the interior of the building through one of the windows. Chaucer finds the place full of persons, all engaged in relating tidings of every event that has happened in the world. A long description here ensues of the tidings conveyed, as well as of the characters chiefly engaged in bringing tidings: at length the poet remarks, that every one is running to a particular quarter of the hall; and that they are not only striving to push aside and pass each other, but are even climbing

[1] Warned well and fair—courteously refused. [2] What her grace was, &c.—what her boon was, I did not know.

over their predecessors' shoulders:—this was the mart to obtain tidings of Love.

At this moment, and before he can have satisfied his curiosity, his eye suddenly encounters the figure of a man, which he declares himself wholly unable to describe, except that his air conveyed both dignity and authority. We are left in doubt as to the character hinted at, and at this juncture the poet awakes from his dream.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EAGLE.

Mine eyen to the heaven I cast;
Then was I 'ware, lo! at the last,
That fasté by the sun on high,
As kennen[1] might I with mine eye,
Methought I saw an eagle soar, 5
But that it seeméd muchel more
Than I had any eagle' yseen,
This is as soth[2] as death certáin,
It was of gold, and shone so bright,
That never saw men such a sight, 10
But if the heaven had ywon
All new of God another sun,
So shone the eagle's feathers bright,
And somewhat downward 'gan it light.

* * * * *

This eagle', of which I have you told, 15
That with feathers shone all of gold,
Which that so high began to soar,
I 'gan beholden more and more
To see her beauty and the wonder;
But never was that dint[3] of thunder, 20
Nor that thing that men callen foudre,[4]
That smite sometimes a tow'r to powder,
And in his swift coming brend,[5]
That so swith 'gan downwárd descend
As this fowl when that it beheld 25
That I arowm[6] was in the field;
And with his grim paws so strong
Within his sharpé nailés long
Me flying at a swap he hent,[7]
And with his souce again up went, 30
Me carrying in his clawés stark,[8]
As lightly' as I had been a lark.

* * * * *

[1] Kennen — behold. [2] Soth—true. [3] Dint— stroke. [4] Foudre— thunderbolt. [5] Brend — burns. [6] Arowm — at large, wandering. [7] Swap he hent—caught me at a swoop. [8] Stark—stiff.

A RECORD OF

CHAUCER'S PERSONAL HABITS,

AN INTERESTING TESTIMONY OF HIS PLACID AND STUDIOUS CHARACTER HIS FRIEND THE EAGLE IS SPEAKING.

"Now well, (quod he.)
First I, that in my feet have thee,
Of whom thou hast great fear and wonder, 35
Am dwelling with the god of Thunder,
Which men ycallen Jupiter,
That doth[1] me flyen full oft far
To do all his commandément,
And for this cause he hath me sent 40
To thee; hearken now by thy truth:
Certáin he hath of thee great ruth,
For that thou hast so truély
So long yserv'd intentifly
His blindé nephew Cupido, 45
And the fair queen Venús also
Withouten guerdon[2] ever yet,
And nathéless hast set thy wit,
Although in thy head full lite[3] is,
To make bookés, songés, and dités, 50
In rhyme or ellés in cadence,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love and of his servants eke,
That have his service sought and seek,
And painest[4] thee to praise his art, 55
Although thou haddest never part;
Wherefore so wisly[5] God me bless,
Jovis yhalt[6] it great humbless[7]
And virtue eke that thou wilt make
Anight full oft thine head to ake 60
In thy study, so thou ywritest,
And evermore of love enditest,
In honour of him and praisings,
And in his folkés furtherings,
And in their matter all devisest, 65
And not him ne his folk despisest,
Although thou may'st go in the dance
Of them that him list not avance;[8]

[1] Doth me, &c.—makes, or orders, me to fly. [2] Guerdon—reward. [3] Lite — little. [4] Painest — strivest. [5] Wisly — surely. [6] Yhalt — holdeth. [7] Humbless—humility. [8] List not avance—*i. e.* although you may follow in the rank of those whom he pleases not to advance in their suits of love.

Wherefore, as I now said, ywis[1]
Jupiter considereth well this, 70
And als,' beausire,[2] of other things,
That is, that thou hast no tidings
Of Lovés folk if they be glad,
Ne of nothing else that God made,
And not only from far country 75
That no tidings comen to thee;
Not of thy very neighbourés,
That dwellen almost at thy doorés,
Thou hearest neither that ne this,
For when thy labour all done is, 80
And hast made all thy reckonings,
In stead of rest and of new things,
Thou goest home to thine house anon,
And all so dumb as any stone
Thou sittest at another book, 85
Till fully daséd[3] is thy look;
And livest thus as a hermit,
Although thine abstinence is lite.[4]

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOUND.

Sound is naught but air ybroken,
And every speeché that is spoken, 90
Whe'r[5] loud or privy, foul or fair,
In his substance n' is but air;
For as flame is but lighted smoke,
Right so is sound but air ybroke:
But this may be in many wise, 95
Of the which I will thee devise,
As sound cometh of pipe or harp;
For when a pipe is blowen sharp
The air is twist with violence
And rent; lo! this is my sentence: 100
Eke when that men harpstringés smite,
Whether that it be much or lite,[4]
Lo! with the stroke the air it breaketh,
And right so breaketh it when men speaketh;
Thus wotst[6] thou well what thing is speech: 105
Now hennesforth I will thee teach
How evereach speeché, voice, or soun,
Through his multiplicatión,
Though it were pipéd of a mouse,
Must needés come to Famés House: 110

[1] Ywis—indeed, of a truth. [2] Als', beausire—and also, fair Sir. [3] Dased—dim sighted. [4] Lite—little. [5] Whe'r—whether. [6] Wottest—knowest.

I prove it thus; taketh heed now
By experience, for if that thou
Throw in a water now a stone,
Well wot'st thou it will make anon
A little roundel as a circle, 115
Par'venture' as broad as a covércle,[1]
And right anon thou shalt see wele
That circle cause another wheel,
And that the third, and so forth, brother,
Evéry circle causing other 120
Much broader than himselfen was,
And thus from roundel to compass,
Each abouten other going
Ycauseth of other's stirring
And multiplying evermo, 125
Till that it be so far ygo
That it at bothé brinkés be,
Although thou mayest it not see
Above, yet go'th it always under,
Although thou think it a great wonder; 130
And whoso saith of truth I vary,
Bid him proven the contrary:
And right thus every word ywis,
That loud or privy yspoken is,
Ymoveth first an air about, 135
And of his moving out of doubt
Another air anon is movéd,
As I have of the water provéd,
That every circle causeth other;
Right so of air, my levé[2] brother 140
Evereach air another stirreth
More and more, and speech up beareth,
Or voice or noise, or word or soun,
Aye through multiplicatión,
Till it be at the House of Fame. 145

THE EAGLE'S FLIGHT WITH THE POET.

"How farest thou now?" quod he to me.
"Right well," quod I. "Now see (quod he)
By thy truthé yonder adown,
Whe'r[3] that thou knowest any town
Or house, or any other thing, 150
And when thou hast of aught knowing,

[1] Covercle—the lid of a pot. [2] Leve—dear. [3] Whe'r—whether.

Then looketh that thou warné [1] me,
And I anon shall tellen thee
How far that thou art now therefro."
And I adown 'gan looken tho,[2] 155
And beheld fieldés and plainés,
Now hillés and now mountainés,
Now valleys and now foréstés,
And now unnethés [3] great beastés,
Now riverés, now cityés, 160
Now townés, and now great treés,
Now shippés sailing in the sea;
But thus soon in a whilé he
Was flowen from the ground so high
That all the world, as to mine eye, 165
No more yseeméd than a prick,[4]
Or ellés was the air so thick
That I ne might it not discern.
With that he spake to me so yern,[5]
And said; "Seest thou any token, 170
Or aught that in this world's of spoken?"
I answered, "Nay."——

* * * * *

"Now turn upwárd (quod he) thy face,
And behold here this largé place,
This air, but look that thou ne be 175
Adread of them that thou shalt see,
For in this región certáin
Dwelleth many a citizen,
Of which yspeaketh Dan Plato,
These be the airish beastés, lo!" 180
And then saw I all the menie [6]
That both ygone and also flye.
"Lo there! (quod he) cast up thine eye,
See yonder, lo! the Galaxy,
The which men clepe the Milky Way, 185
For it is white, and some parfay[7]
Ycallen it have Watling-street,
That onés was brent [8] with the heat,
When that the sunés son the red,
Which that hight Phaëton, would lead 190
Algate [9] his father's car and gie.[10]
"The car-horses 'gan well espy
That he ne could no governance,
And 'gonen for to leap and prance,

[1] Warne—apprise. [2] Tho—then. [3] Unnethes—not easily, partially. [4] Prick — point. [5] Yern — quickly. [6] Menie — company. [7] Parfay—by my faith. [8] Brent—burned. [9] Algate—at all events. [10] Gie—guide.

And bare him now up and now down 195
Till that he saw the Scorpion,
Which that in heaven a sign is yet,
And he for fear ylost his wit
Of that, and let the reinés gone
Of his horses, and they anon 200
Soon up to mount and down descend,
Till both the air and earth ybrend ;[1]
Till Jupiter, lo ! at the last
Him slew, and from the car ycast.
" Lo ! is it not a great mischance 205
To let a fool have governance
Of things that he can not demain ?"[2]
And with this word, soth for to sain,
He 'gan alway upper to soar,
And gladed me then more and more, 210
So faithfully to me spake he.
Then 'gan I to look under me,
And beheld the airish beastés
Cloudés, mistés, and tempestés,
Snowés, hailés, rains, and windés, 215
And the engend'ring in their kindés,
All the way through which I came ;
" O God ! quod I, that made Adame,
Much is thy might and nobleness ! "

THEY ARRIVE AT THE HOUSE OF FAME.

" See here the House of Famé, lo ! 220
May'st thou not hearé that I do ?"
" Hear what ?" quod I. " The greaté soun
(Quod he) that rumbleth up and down
In Famés House, full of tidings
Both of fair speech and of chidings, 225
And of false and soth compounéd ;
Hearken well, it is not rownéd.[3]
Hearest thou not the greaté sough ?"[4]
" Yes, pardie, (quod I) well enough."
" And what soun is it like ?" quod he. 230
" Peter ! like th' beating of the sea
(Quod I) against the rockés hollow,
When tempests do their shippés swallow,
And that a man stand out of doubt,
A mile off thence and hear it rout ; 235

[1] Ybrend—burn. [2] Demain—understand. [3] Rowned—whispered.
[4] Sough—noise, as the blowing of wind.

Or ellés like to the humbling [1]
After the clap of a thund'ring,
When Jovis hath the air vivea: :
But it doth me for fear to sweat."

THE DESCRIPTION OF FAME.

But in this lusty[2] and riché place, 240
That Famés Hall yclaméd was,
Full muchel press of folk there n'as,[3]
Ne crowding, for too muchel press ;
But all on high above a dais[4]
Sat in a seat imperial 245
That made was of ruby royal
Which that a carbuncle is calléd,
I saw perpetually installéd
A feminine créature,
That never forméd by Nature 250
Was such an other thing I say ;
For alderfirst,[5] the soth to say,
Me thoughten that she was so lite[6]
That the small length of a cubit
Was longer than she seeméd be. 255
But thus soon in a whilé she
Herself then wonderly ystreight[7]
That with her feet she th' earth yreight,[8]
And with her head she touchéd heaven,
There as shineth the starrés seven ; 260
And thereto yet, as to my wit,
I sawén a great wonder yet,
Upon her even to behold.
But certainly I them never told,
For as fele[9] even hadden she 265
As feathers upon fowlés be,
Or weren on the beastés four
That Goddés throne can to honóur,
As writeth John in th' Apocalypse.
Her hair, that was owndy[10] and crips,[11] 270
As burnéd gold it shone to see.
And, soth[12] to tellen also, she
Had also fele[9] upstanding ears,
And tongués as on beast be hairs,
And on her feet waxen saw I 275
Partridge's wingés readily.

[1] Humbling — humming. [2] Lusty — pleasant. [3] N'as — was not. [4] Dais — a raised seat. [5] Alderfirst — first of all. [6] Lite — little. [7] Ystreight — stretched. [8] Yreight — reached. [9] Fele — many. [10] Owndy, Fr. *ondé*—waving. [11] Crips—crisp. [12] Soth—truth.

THE BLAST OF ÆOLUS'S BRAZEN TRUMPET OF SLANDER, OR ILL FAME.

What did this Æolus? but he
Took out his blacké trump of brass,
That fouler than the devil was,
And 'gan this trumpé for to blow 280
As all the world should overthrow.
Throughout evéry región
Ywent this foulé trumpés soun
As swift as pellet out of gun
When fire is in the powder run, 285
And such a smoké 'gan out wend [1]
Out of the foulé trumpés end,
Black, blue, and greenish, swartish,[2] red,
As doeth where that men melt lead,
Lo! all on high from the tewel;[3] 290
And thereto one thing saw I well,
That aye the farther that it ran
The greater waxen it began,
As doeth the river from a well,[4]
And it stank as the pit of hell. 295

THE HOUSE OF TIDINGS.

Then saw I stand in a valley,
Under the castle fasté by,
A House that *Domus Dædali*,
That *Labyrinthus* yclepéd is,
N'as made so wonderly iwis,[5] 300
Ne half so quaintly [6] was ywrought;
And evermore as swift as thought
This quaint House abouten ywent,
That nevermore it still ystent,[7]
And there came out so great a noise, 305
That had it stooden upon Oyse [8]
Men might have heard it easily
To Rome, I trowen sikerly;[9]
And the noise which that I yheard
For all the world right so it far'd 310
As doth the routing of the stone
That from th' engíne is letten gone.
And all this House of which I rede [10]
Was made of twiggés sallow, red,

[1] Wend — go. [2] Swartish — dark, blackish. [3] Tewel — funnel. [4] Well — spring. [5] Iwis — of a truth. [6] Quaintly — curiously. [7] Ystent — stood. [8] Oyse — a river in Picardy. [9] Sikerly — surely. [10] Rede—inform you.

And greené eke, and some were white, 315
Such as men to the cages twight,[1]
Or maken of these paniérs,
Or ellés hutchés or dossers,[2]
That for the sough and for the twiggés
This House was all so full of giggés,[3] 320
And all so full eke of chirkings,[4]
And of many other workings.
And eke this House hath of entries
As many' as leavés be on trees
In summer when that they be green; 325
And on the roof yet men may seen
A thousand holés, and well mo,
To letten the sound out ygo;
And by day in evéry tide
Be all the doorés open wide, 330
And by night each one is unshut;
Ne porter is there none to let
No manner tidings in to pace,[5]
Ne never rest is in that place,
That it n'is filléd full of tidings, 335
Either loud or of whisperings,
And ever all the House's angles
Is full of rownings[6] and of jangles,
Of wars, of peace, of marriáges,
Of rests, of labour, of viáges, 340
Of abode, of deathé, and of life,
Of love, of hate, accord, of strife,
Of loss, of lore, and of winnings,
Of heal, of sickness, or leasings,[7]
Of fair weather and tempestés, 345
Of qualm, of folk, and of beastés,
Of divers transmutatións
Of estatés and of regións,
Of trust, of drede,[8] of jealousy,
Of wit, of winning, of folly, 350
Of plenty and of great famine,
Of cheap, of dearth, and of ruin,
Of good or of misgovernment,
Of fire, and divers accident.
And lo! this House of which I write 355
Siker[9] be ye it n'as not lite,[10]

[1] Twight—twist. [2] Dossers, Fr. *dos*—baskets carried on the back. [3] Gigges—sounds produced from any whirling motion of a machine: the term is still applied to the reels in spinning manufactories. Some of my readers, who will own to forty years' standing, may remember the little horn whipping-top, called a *gig*. [4] Chirkings—chirpings. [5] Pace—pass. [6] Rownings—mutterings. [7] Leasings—lyings. [8] Drede—doubt. [9] Siker—sure. [10] Lite—small.

For it was sixty mile of length ;
Al'[1] was the timber of no strength,
Yet it is founded to endure,
While that it list, to A'venture, 360
That is the mother of Tidings,
(As the sea of wellés and springs,)
And it was shapen like a cage.
Certés, quod I, in all mine age
Ne saw I such a House as this. 365
And as I wonder'd me ywis[2]
Upon this House, then 'ware was I
How that mine eagle fasté by
Was perchéd high upon a stone,
And I 'gan straight to him to gone, 370
And sayéd him thus; "I pray thee
That thou a while abiden me
For Goddés love, and let me seen
What wonders in that place ybeen,
For yet paraunter[3] I may lere[4] 375
Some good therein, or somewhat hear,
That lief me[5] where e'er that I went."
"Peter, that is now mine intent,
(Quod he to me) therefore I dwell;
But certain one thing I thee tell, 380
That but I bringen thee therein
Ne shalt thou never conne the gin[6]
To come into it out of doubt,
So fast it whirleth, lo! about;
But sithe that Jovis of his grace, 385
As I have said, will thee solace
Finally with these ilké things,
These uncouth sightés and tidings,
To pass away thine heaviness,
Such ruth hath he of thy distress 390
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And wot'st[7] thy selven utterly
Wholly desperate of all bliss,
Sithe that Fortúne hath made amiss
The sote[8] of all thine heartés rest 395
Languish, and eke in point to brest,[9]
But he through his mighty merit
Will do thee ease, al' be it lite,[10]
And gave in express commandément,
To which I am obedient, 400

[1] Al'—although. [2] Ywis—indeed. [3] Paraunter—peradventure. [4] Lere—learn. [5] That lief me—which may delight me. [6] Conne the gin—understand the contrivance. [7] Wot'st—knowest. [8] Sote—sweet. [9] Brest—burst. [10] Lite—little.

To farther thee with all my might,
And wiss[1] and teachen thee aright
Where thou may'st most tidingés hear,
Thou shalt here many one ylere."[2]
And with this word he right anon 405
Yhent me up between his tone,[3]
And at a window in me brought
That in this House was, as methought,
And therewithal methought it stent,[4]
And nothing it abouten went, 410
And me set in the floor adown :
But such great congregatión
Of folk as I saw roam about,
Some it within, and some without,
N'as never seen, ne shall be eft,[5] 415
That certés in this world n'is left
So many formédby Natúre,
Ne dead so many a creatúre,
That well unnethés[6] in that place
Had I a footés brede[7] of space ; 420
And every wight that I saw there
Rownéd[8] evereach in other's ear
A newé tiding privily,
Or else he told it openly,
Right thus, and said ; "Ne wot'st not thou 425
That is betidden, lo ! right now ?"
"No, certés, quod he ; tell me what :"
And then he told him this and that,
And swore thereto that it was soth,[9]
Thus hath he said, and thus he doth, 430
And this shall be', and thus heard I say,
That shall be found, that dare I lay ;
That all the folk that is on live
Ne have the cunning to descrive
Those thingés that I hearden there, 435
What aloud and what in th' ear ;
But all the wonder most was this,
When one had heard a thing ywis[10]
He came straight to another wight,
And 'gan him tellen anon right 440
The same tale that to him was told
Ere it a furlong way was old,
And began somewhat for to eche[11]
Unto this tiding in his speech

[1] Wiss—inform. [2] Ylere—learn. [3] Tone—caught me up between his claws: tone, the plural of toe. [4] Stent—stopped. [5] Eft—after. [6] Unnethes—scarcely. [7] Brede—breadth. [8] Rowned—whispered. [9] Soth—true. [10] Ywis—indeed, of a truth. [11] Eche—add.

More than ever it spoken was, 445
And not so soon departed was
Then from him that he ne met
With the third man, and ere he let[1]
Any stound[2] he ytold him alse;
Weren the tidings soth or false 450
Yet would he tell it nathéless,
And evermore with more encrease
Than it was erst: thus north and south
Went every tiding from mouth to mouth,
And that encreasing evermo, 455
As fire is wont to quicken' and go,
From a sparkle sprung amiss,
Till all a city brent up is.
And when that that was full up sprung,
And waxen more on every tongue 460
Than e'er it was, and went anon
Up to a window out to gone;
Or but it might[3] out there ypass
It 'gan out creep at some crevass,
And flew forth fasté for the nones.[4] 465
And sometime I saw there at once,
A leasing and a sad sothsaw,[5]
That gonnen of adventure[6] draw
Out at a window for to pace,
And when they metten in that place 470
They were acheckéd bothé two,
And neither of them might out go,
For each other they gone so crowd,
Till each of them 'gan cryen loud,
"Let me gone first;"—"Nay, but let me, 475
And here I will ensuren thee
With vowés that thou wilt do so,
That I shall never from thee go,
But be alway thine own sworn brother;
We will meddle[7] us each in other, 480
That no man be he ne'er so wroth
Shall have one of us two, but both
At onés, as beside his leave,
Come we amorrow or on eve,
Be we ycried or still yrownéd:[8] 485
Thus saw I false and soth[9] compowned

[1] Let—stayed. [2] Stound—short time. [3] Or but it might—so that it could but pass out. [4] Nones—occasion. [5] Leasing and a sad sothsaw—a lie and a staid truth. [6] Gonnen of adventure—that strove by chance to pass out at a window. [7] Meddle—mingle, join. [8] Yrowned—whispered. [9] False and soth—falsehood and truth compounded, mixed up together.

Together fly for one tiding.
Thus out at holés gone to wring
Evéry tiding straight to Fame,
And she 'gan given each his name 490
After her dispositión,
And give them eke duratión,
Some to waxen and wanen soon,
As doth the fair and whité moon,
And let him gone: there might I seén 495
Winged wonders full fast flyen
Twenty thousand all in a rout,
As Æolus them blew about:
And, Lord! this House in allé times
Was full of shipmen and pilgrims, 500
With scrippés brettful of leasings,[1]
Intermeddled[2] with tidings;
And eke aloné by them selve
A many thousand timés twelve,
Saw I eke of these pardoners, 505
Currours,[3] and eke messengers,
With boxes cramméd full of lyes
As ever vessel was with lies:[4]
And as I alderfastest[5] went
About, and did all mine intent 510
Me for to playen and for to lere,[6]
And eke a tiding for to hear,
That I had heard of some countrý,
That shall not now be told for me,
(For it no need is) readily 515
Folk can ysing it bet than I,
For all must out or late or rathe[7]
Allé the sheavés in the lathe.[8]
I hearden a great noise withal
Within a corner of the hall, 520
Where men of love tidingés told,
And I 'gan thitherward behold,
For I saw running every wight
As fast as that they hadden might,
And evereach cried; "What thing is that?" 525
And some said; "I n'ot[9] never what:"
And when they were all on a heap
Then they behind gonnen up leap,
And clomben up on other fast,
And up the noise on highen cast, 530

[1] Brettful of leasings — brimful of lies. [2] Intermeddled — intermingled. [3] Currours—runners. [4] Lies—leas (of wine, &c.) [5] Alderfastest — as fast as possible. [6] Lere — learn. [7] Rathe — early. [8] Lathe—barn. [9] N'ot—ne wot, know not.

And treaden fast on other's heels,
And stamp, as men do after eels.
But at the last I saw a man
Which that I not descrive ne can,
But he yseeméd for to be 535
A man of great authority.
  And therewithal I 'anon abraid
Out of my sleepé half afraid,
Rememb'ring well what I had seen,
And how high and far I'd been, 540
In my ghost,[1] and had great wonder
Of that the mighty god of Thunder
Had let me knowen, and 'gan to write
Like as ye have heard m'indite,
Wherefore to study' and read alway 545
I purpose to do day by day.
  And thus in dreaming and in game
Endeth this little Book of Fame.

[1] Ghost—spirit.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

The Romaunt of the Rose is an allegory depicting the difficulties and dangers encountered by a lover in pursuit of his mistress, who is set forth under the emblem of a Rose. For a short notice of this poem, see the *Life of Chaucer*, vol. i. p. 10. We shall proceed to extract a few favourable passages of descriptive beauty from this voluminous composition, which in the English translation comprises nearly 8,000 verses: the original poem extended to 20,000.

PORTRAIT OF COVETOUSNESS.

AND next was painted Covetise,
That eggeth[1] folk in many' a guise[2]
To take and give right naught again,
And great treasúrés up to lain.
And that is she that for usure 5
Lendeth to many a creature
The less for the more winning,
Se covetous is her burning!
And that is she, for pennies fele,[3]
That teacheth for to rob and steal 10
Those thievés and those small harlóts;
And that is ruth, for by their throats
Full many one hangeth at last;
She maketh folk compáss and cast
To taken other folkés thing 15
Through robbery' or miscoveting;
And that is she that maketh treachers,
And she that maketh false pleaders,
That with their termés and their dooms[4]
Do maidens, children, and eke grooms,[5] 20
Their heritage, alas! forgo:
Full crooked were her handés two,
For Covetise is ever wood[6]
To gripen other folkés good.
For Covetise for her winning 25
Full lefe hath[7] other mennés thing.

[1] Eggeth—inciteth. [2] Guise—fashion. [3] Fele—several. [4] Dooms—judgments. [5] Grooms—youths. [6] Wood—mad. [7] Full lefe hath—gladly possesseth other men's property.

PORTRAIT OF AVARICE.

Another image set, saw I,
Next unto Covetise fast by,
And she was clepéd Avarice :
Full foul in painting was that vice, 30
Full sad and caitif[1] was she eke,
And also green as any leek ;
So evil hu'd was her colóur
Her seem'd t' have livéd in languór ;
She was like thing for hunger dead, 35
That led her life only by bread
Kneaded with eisel strong and aigre,[2]
And thereto she was lean and meagre ;
And she was clad full poverly
All in an old torn courtepy[3] 40
As she were all with doggés torn,
And both behind and eke beforn
Ycloutéd was she beggarly.
A mantle hung her fasté by
Upon a bench both weak and small ; 45
A burnet[4] coat hung there withal,
Yfurréd with no menivere,[5]
But with a furré rough of hair
Of lambé skinnés heavy' and black :
It was full old I undertake, 50
For Avarice to clothe her well
Ne hasteth her never adeal ;[6]
For certainly it were her loth
To wearen of that ilké cloth ;
And if it were forwearéd, she 55
Would haven full great nicéty[7]
Of clothing ere she bought her new,
Al'[8] were it bad of wool and hue.
This Avarice held in her hand
A purse which hungé by a band 60
And that she hid and bound so strong
Men must abiden wonder long
Out of the purse ere there came aught,
For that ne cometh in her thought :
It was not certain her intent 65
That from that purse a penny went.

[1] Caitif—wretched. [2] Eisel strong and aigre—strong and sharp vinegar. [3] Courtepy—short cloak. (See Prol. *Cant. Tales*, v. 292.) Burnet—brown. [5] Menivere—description of fur. [6] Never adeal—not a whit. [7] Nicety—daintiness. [8] Al'—although.

PORTRAIT OF ENVY.

And by that image nigh enough
Was painted Envy, that ne'er laugh,
Nor never well in her heart far'd
But if she either saw or heard 70
Some great mischance or great disease :
Nothing ne may so much her please
As mischief and misáventure ;
Or when she seeth discomfiture
Upon a worthy man yfall, 75
Then liketh her right well withal :
She is full glad in her courége[1]
If she see any great lin'áge
Be brought to naught in shameful wise ;
And if a man in honour rise, 80
Or by his wit or his prowess,
Of that she hath great heaviness,
For trusteth well she goeth nigh wood[2]
When any chance yhappeth good.
Envy is of such cruelty, 85
That faith ne truth ne holdeth she
To friend ne fellow bad or good ;
Ne she hath kin none of her blood
That she n'is full their enemy ;
She n'old, I dare say hardily,[3] 90
That her own father faréd well :
And sore abideth she every deal[4]
Her malice and her mal talent,
For she is in so great torment
And hate, such when that folk doth good, 95
That nigh she melteth for pure wood :[5]
Her heart so carveth and so breaketh
That God the people well a wreaketh.[6]
Envy ywis[7] shall never let[8]
Some blame upon the folk to set : 100
I trow that if Envý ywis
Yknew the besté man that is
On this side or beyond the sea
Yet somewhat lacken[9] him would she ;
And if he were so hend[10] and wise 105
That she ne might abate his prise,[11]
Yet would she blame his worthiness,
Or by her wordés make it less.

[1] Courage—spirit, mind. [2] Wood—mad. [3] Hardily—she would not, I dare say boldly. [4] Every deal—entirely. [5] Wood—madness. [6] Wreaketh — revengeth. [7] Ywis — indeed. [8] Let — prevent. [9] Lacken — find fault with. [10] Hend — civil, courteous. [11] Prise—renown.

I saw Envy in that painting
Yhad a wonderful looking, 110
For she ne lookéd but awry
Or overthwart, all baggingly;[1]
And she had a full foul uságe,
She mighten look in no visage
Of man ne woman forth right plain, 115
But shut her one eye for disdain:
So for envy yburnéd she
When she might any man ysee
That fair or worthy were or wise,
Or ellés stood in folkés prise. 120

PORTRAIT OF SORROW.

Sorrow was painted next Envy
Upon that wall of masonry;
But well was seen in her colóur
That she had livéd in languór;
Her seemed to have the jaundice; 125
Not half so pale was Avarice,
Ne nothing alike of leanness,
For sorrow, thought, and great distress,
That she had suffer'd day and night
Made her yellow, and nothing bright: 130
Full sad, pale, and meagre' also,
Was never wight yet half so woe
As that her seeméd for to be,
Nor so fulfill'd with ire as she;
I trow that no wight might her please, 135
Nor do that thing that might her ease;
Nor she ne would her sorrow slack,
Nor comfort none unto her take,
So deep ywas her woe begone,
And eke her heart in anger run. 140
A sorrowful thing well seeméd she;
Nor she had nothing slow ybe
For to bescratchen all her face,
And for to rend in many place
Her clothes, and for to tear her swire,[2] 145
As she that was fulfill'd of ire;
And all to torn lay eke her hair
About her shoulders here and there,
As she that had it all to-rent
For anger and for mal talent.[3] 150

[1] Baggingly — squintingly. [2] Swire — neck. [3] Mal talent — evil desire, or affection.

And eke I tell you certainly
How that she wept full tenderly:
In world n'is wight so hard of heart,
That had yseen her sorrows smart,
That n'olde[1] have had of her pity, 155
So woe begone a thing was she.
She all to dash'd herself for woe,
And smote together her handés two;
To Sorrow was she full intentif,[2]
That woful reckéless caitiff, 160
Her roughté[3] little of playing,
Or of clipping[4] or kissing,
For who so sorrowful is in heart
Him lusteth not to play ne start,[5]
Nor for to dancen ne to sing, 165
Ne may his heart in temper bring
To maké joy on even or morrow,
For joy is contrary to sorrow.

PORTRAIT OF OLD AGE.

Eld[6] was ypainted after this,
That shorter was a foot iwis 170
Than she was wont in her younghead;[7]
Unneth[8] herself she might yfeed:
So feeble and so old was she
That faded was all her beauty;
Full sallow was waxen her colóur; 175
Her head for hoar was white as flour:
Iwis[9] great qualm[10] ne were it none,
Ne sin, although her life were gone.
All waxen was her body' unweild,[11]
And dry and dwinéd[12] all for eld: 180
A foul forwelked[13] thing was she,
That whilom round and soft had be:
Her hairés shooken fast withal,
As from her head they woulden fall;
Her face yfrouncéd and forpinéd,[14] 185
And both her handés lorn[15] fordwinéd:[16]
So old she was that she ne went
A foot but it were by potent.[17]

[1] N'olde—ne would, would not. [2] Intentif—attentive. [3] Roughte—recked, cared. [4] Clipping — embracing. [5] Start — leap, skip. [6] Eld—old age. [7] Younghead—youth. [8] Unneth—scarcely. [9] Iwis—certainly. [10] Qualm—grief. [11] Unweild—her body had grown unwieldy. [12] Dwined — dwindled. [13] Forwelked — withered. [14] Yfrounced and forpined—wrinkled and shrunk. [15] Lorn—lost, helpless. [16] *Fordwined*—wasted away. [17] Potent—crutch.

The time that passeth night and day,
And restiless travaíleth aye, 190
And stealeth from us privily,
That to us seemeth sikerly[1]
That it in one point dwelleth ever,
And certes it ne resteth never,
But goeth so fast and passeth aye 195
That there n'is man that thinken may
What timé that now present is :
Asketh[2] at these great clerkés this ;
For men thinketh it readily
Three timés been ypasséd by 200
The timé that may not sojóurn,
But go'th and may nevér return,
As water that down runneth aye,
But never drop returné may.
There may nothíng as time endure, 205
Ne metal nor earthly creatúre,
For allé thing is fret[3] and shall,
The time eke that ychangeth all,
And all doth wax and fost'red be,
And allé thing destroyeth he : 210
The time that eldeth[4] our ancestors,
And eldeth kings and emperors,
And that us all shall overcomen,
Ere that death us shall have nomen,[5]
The timé that hath all in wield[6] 215
To elden folk had made her eld[7]
So inly, that to my weeting[8]
She mighten help herself nothing,
But turn'd again unto childhead :
She had nothíng herself to lead, 220
Nor wit nor pith within her hold,[9]
More than a child of two years old.
But nathéless I trow that she
Was fair sometime and fresh to see
When she was in her rightful age, 225
But she was past all that passáge,
And was a doted[10] thing becomen ;
A furréd cap on had she nomen ;[5]
Well had she clad herself and warm,
For cold might else doen her harm : 230

[1] Sikerly— certainly. [2] Asketh — (imperative) ask. [3] Is fret — weareth. [4] Eldeth—maketh old. [5] Nomen—*Sax.:* taken. [6] Wield —government, subjugation. [7] Eld—antiquity. [8] Weeting—thinking. [9] Nor wit, &c.—neither sense nor strength within her frame. [10] Doted—foolish, superannuated.

These old folk haven alway cold,
Their kind[1] is such when they be old.

PORTRAIT OF HYPOCRISY.

An other thing was down there write[2]
That seeméd like a hypocrite,
And it was cleped Papelardy;[3] 235
That ilk is she that privily
Ne spareth ne'er a wicked deed
When men of her taken no heed,
And maketh her outward precious,[4]
With pale viság̃e and piteous, 240
And seemeth a simple creature,
But there n'is no misáventure
That she ne think'th in her courág̃e :[5]
Full like to her was thilk imág̃e
That maked was like her semblance, 245
She was full simple' of countenance;
And she was clothéd and eke shod
As she were[6] for the love of God
Yholden to religión,
Such seeméd her devotión. 250
A psalter held she fast in hond,
And busily she 'gan to fond[7]
To make many a faint prayér
To God and to his saintés dear:
Nor she was gay, fresh, nor jolif, 255
But seeméd to be full intentif
To goodé workés and to fair,
And thereto she had on a hair.[8]
Ne certés she was fat nothíng,
But seeméd weary for fasting: 260
Of colour pale and dead was she;
From her the gates aye warnéd be
Of Paradise, that blissful place,
For such folk makén lean their grace,
As Christ saith in his Evangile, 265
To get 'hem praise in town awhile,
And for a little glory vain
They lesén God and eke his reign.[9]

[1] Kind—nature, habit. [2] Write—(for) written. [3] Papelardy—hypocrisy. [4] Outward precious—over nice outwardly. [5] Courage—mind. [6] As she were—as though she were. [7] Fond—search. [8] Hair—hair-cloth. [9] They lesen, &c.—they lose God as well as his kingdom.

PORTRAIT OF POVERTY.

And alderlast[1] of evereachone
Was painted Poverty' all alone, 270
That not a penny had in hold,
Although that she her clothés sold,
And though she should a hangéd be,
For naked as a worm was she,
And if the weather stormy were, 275
For cold she should have dyéd there.
She ne' had on but a strait old sack,
And many' a clout on it there stack;[2]
This was her coat and her mantle;
No moré was there never a deal[3] 280
To clothe her with; I undertake
Great leisure haddé she to quake:
And she was put, that I of talk,
Far from these other', up in a halk;[4]
There lurkéd and there cow'réd she, 285
For povér thing,[5] where so it be,
Is shamefac'd and despiséd aye:
Accursed may well be that day
That pover man conceivéd is,
For God wot all too seld'[6] i-wis[7] 290
Is any poor man well ifed,
Or well arrayéd or iclad,
Or well belovéd, in such wise
In honour that he may arise.

DESCRIPTION OF IDLENESS, WHO INTRODUCES THE POET INTO THE GARDEN.

Then 'gan I go a full great pace 295
Environ,[8] even in compass,
The closing of the squaré wall,
Till that I found a wicket small
So shut that I ne might in gone,
And other entry was there none. 300
Upon this door I 'gan to smite
That was so fetis and so lite,[9]
For other way could I not seek.
Full long I shov'd and knockéd eke,

[1] Alderlast—last of all. [2] Stack—stuck. [3] Never a deal—not a bit. [4] Halk—corner. [5] Pover thing—that which is poor. [6] Seld'—seldom. [7] I-wis — certainly, of a truth. [8] Environ — about. [9] Fetis and lite—neat and small.

And stood full long all hearkening 305
If I heard any wight coming,
Till that the door of thilk [1] entry
A maiden courteous opened me :
Her hair was as yellow of hue
As any basin [2] scoured new ; 310
Her fleshé tender as is a chick,
With bent browés both smooth and sleek ;
And thereto by measure largé were
The opening of her eyen clear ;
Her nose of good proportión ; 315
Her eyen grey as is a falcon ;
With sweeté breath and well favóuréd ;
Her facé white and well colóuréd ;
With little mouth and round to see ;
A cloven chinné eke had she ; 320
Her neck was of good fashión,
In length and greatness by reason.[3]

* * * * *

From Hierusalem' to Burgoigne
There n'is [4] a fairer neck i-wis [5]
To feel how smooth and soft it is ; 325
Her throat also so white of hue,
As snow on branch ysnowéd new ;
Of body full well wrought was she,
Men needen not in no country
A fairer body for to seek ; 330
And of fine orfrais [6] had she eke
A chapilet,[7] so seemly on
Ne never wearéd maid upon ;
And fair above that chapilet [7]
A rose garland had she yset ; 335
She had also a gay mirrór ;
And with a riché gold tressóur [8]
Her head was tresséd full quaintly ;[9]
Her sleevés sewéd fetously ;[10]
And for to keep her handés fair, 340
Of glovés white she had a pair ;
And she had on a coat of green
Of cloth of Ghent withouten ween :[11]

[1] Thilk—that. [2] Basin—this utensil was formerly made of brass; witness Mambrino's helmet. Hence the aptness of our poet's simile of the lady's hair. [3] By reason—of reasonable proportion. [4] N'is —is not. [5] I-wis—certainly. [6] Orfrais—gold embroidery. [7] Chapilet — wreath. [8] Tressour — an ornament in dressing the hair. [9] Quaintly—curiously. [10] Fetously—neatly. [11] Withouten ween — undoubtedly.

Well seeméd by her apparel
She was not wont to great travel,[1] 345
For when she kempt was fetously,[2]
And well array'd and richély,
Then had she done all her journé[3]
For merry' and well begone[4] was she.
She had a lusty[5] life in May, 350
She had no thought by night ne day
Of nothing but it were only
To grai'th[6] her well and uncouthly.
When that this door had open'd me
This maiden, seemly for to see, 355
I thankéd her as I best might,
And askéd her how that she hight,[7]
And what she was I asked eke?
And she to me was naught unmeek,
Nor of her answér dangerous,[8] 360
But fair answér'd, and sayéd thus:
"Lo, Sir, my name is Idleness,
So clepen men me more and less:
Full mighty and full rich am I,
And that of one thing, namély, 365
For I intending[9] to no thing
But to my joy and my playing,
And for to comb and tressé me:
Acquainted am I, and privy[10]
With Mirth, the lord of this garden, 370
That from the' land of Alexandrin
Made the treés hither be fet[11]
That in this garden be iset;
And when the trees were wax'd a height,
This wall, that stant[12] here in thy sight, 375
Did Mirth enclosen all about;
And these imáges all without
He did 'hem both entail[13] and paint
That neither be jolif ne quaint[14]
But they be full of sorrow and wo, 380
As thou hast seen a while ago."

[1] Travel — labour, handicraft. [2] Kempt was fetously — trimly combed. [3] Journé—day's work. [4] Well begone—in a good way. [5] Lusty—pleasant. [6] To grai'th her, &c.—to prepare herself well and extraordinarily. [7] She hight — was named. [8] Dangerous — thrifty, sparing. [9] Intending—giving attention. [10] Privy—intimate. [11] Fet—brought. [12] Stant—standeth. [13] Entail—carve. [14] Jolif ne quaint—joyful nor strange.

PORTRAIT OF MIRTH, LORD OF THE GARDEN, AND HIS MISTRESS GLADNESS.

Full fair was Mirth, full long and high,
A fairer man I never sigh :[1]
As round as apple was his face,
Full ruddy' and white in every place ; 385
Fetis[2] he was and well beseie,[3]
With meetly[4] mouth, and eyen grey ;
His nose by measure wrought full right ;
Crisp was his hair, and eke full bright ;
His shoulderés of largé brede,[5] 390
And smallish in the girdlestead ;[6]
He seeméd like a portraiture,
So noble' he was of his stature,
So fair, so jolly', and so fetise,
With limbés wrought at point devise,[7] 395
Deliver,[8] smart, and of great might,
Ne saw thou never man so light ;
Of beard unneth[9] had he nothíng,
For it was in the firsté spring ;
Full young he was, and merry' of thought, 400
And in samette[10] with birdés wrought ;
And with gold beat'n full fetously[11]
His body was clad full richély ;
Wrought was his robe in strangé guise,[12]
And all to-slittered[13] for quaintise[14] 405
In many a placé, low and high ;
And shod he was with great mastry
With shoon decoped,[15] and with lace,
By drury[16] and eke by solace ;
His lefe[17] a rosen chapelet 410
Had made, and on his head it set.
And weeten ye who was his lefe ?
Dame Gladness there was him so lefe,
That singeth so well with glad couráge,
That from she was twelve years of age 415
She of her love grant to him made :
Sir Mirth her by the finger had
Dancing, and she him also ;

[1] Sigh — saw. [2] Fetis — neat, compact. [3] Beseie — beseen. [4] Meetly — proportionable. [5] Brede — breadth. [6] Girdlestead — waist, place of the girdle. [7] Point devise—with perfect exactness. [8] Deliver — nimble. [9] Unneth — scarcely. [10] Samette — rich silk. [11] Beat'n full fetously — skilfully prepared. [12] Guise — fashion. [13] Slittered—cut, slashed. [14] Quaintise—trimness. [15] Decoped, Fr. *decoupé* — cut down. [16] Drury — courtship, gallantry. [17] Lefe — beloved.

Great love there was betwixt them two;
Both were they fair and bright of hue; 420
She seeméd like a rosé new
Of colours, and her flesh so tender,
That with a briar small and tender
Men might it cleave, I dare well sain;
Her forehead frouncéless[1] all plain; 425
Bent weren her eye-brows two;
Her eyen grey, and glad also,
That laughden aye in her semblant,
First ere the mouth by covenant;[2]
I n'ot what of her nose descrive,[3] 430
So fair hath no woman alive;
Her hair was yellow', and clear shining;
I wot no lady so liking.
Of orfrays[4] fresh was her garland;
I, who seen have a thousand, 435
Saw ne'er i-wis no garland yet
So well ywrought of silk as it;
And in an over gilt samite[5]
Yclad she was by great delight,
Of which her lefe[6] a robe ywear'd; 440
The merrier she in hearté far'd.

DISPRAISE OF NIGGARDLINESS.

A full great fool is he iwis[7]
That rich, and poor, and niggard is.
A lord may[8] have no manner vice
That grieveth more than avarice; 445
For niggard ne'er with strength of hand
May win him great lordship or land;
For friendés all too few hath he
To do his will performéd be;
And whoso will have friendés here, 450
He may not hold his treasure dear;
For by example tell I this;
Right as an adamant i-wis
Can drawen to him subtlely
The iron that is laid thereby; 455
So draweth folkés hearts i-wis
Silver and gold that given is.

[1] Frounceless—unwrinkled. [2] By covenant—her eyes, as it were by agreement, anticipated her mouth in laughter. [3] Descrive—I know not how to describe her nose. [4] Orfrays—gold embroidery. [5] Samite—rich silk. [6] Lefe—lover. [7] I-wis—in truth. [8] May—can.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GARDEN.

The garden was by measuring
Right even' and square in compassing;
It as longé was, as it was large; 460
Of fruit had every tree his charge,
But [1] it were any hideous [2] tree,
Of which there weren two or three.
There were (and that wot I full well)
Of pomegranates a full great deal, 465
That is a fruit full well to like,
Namely to folk when they be sick;
And trees there weren great foisón [3]
That bearen nuts in their seasón
Such as men Nutmeggés call, 470
That sweet of savour be withall,
And of almandrés great plentý,
Figgés, and many a daté tree,
There weren, if that men had need,
Through the garden in length and brede. 475
There was eke waxing [4] many' a spice,
As clove gilofre,[5] and licorice,
Gingiber, and grain de Paris,[6]
Canelle,[7] and setéwale [8] of price,
And many' a spice delitáble 480
To eaten when men rise from table.
And many homely trees there were
That peaches, coines,[9] and apples bare,
Medlars, plummés, pearés, chásteinés,[10]
Cherries, of which many one fain is, 485
Nuttés, and aleis,[11] and bolas,[12]
That for to see it was solace,
With many high laurel and pine,
Was rangéd clean all that garden
With cypress, and with oliverés, 490
Of which that nigh no plenty [13] here is.

[1] But — except. [2] Hideous — bad, dreadful. [3] Foison — plenty. [4] Waxing—growing. [5] Clove gilofre—clove-tree. *See note.* [6] Grain de Paris—paradise seeds, a spice. [7] Canelle—mace. [8] Setewale—valerian. [9] Coines — quinces. [10] Chasteines — chestnuts. [11] Aleis —lotus tree. [12] Bolas—bullace plum. [13] No plenty—which were rather scarce.

V. 477. *clove gilofre.*] *Clou de girofle*, Fr. *caryophillus*, Lat. a clove-tree, or the fruit of it. Sir J. Mandeville, c. xxvi., describing a country beyond Cathay, says; "And in that contree, and in other contrees thereabouten, growen many trees that bearen *clowe gylofres* and notemuges, and grete notes of Ynde, and of canelle and other spices."

There weren elmés great and strong,
Maples, ash, oak, asp, planés long,
Fine yew, poplar, and lindens fair,
And other trees full many' a pair. 495
What should I tell you more of it?
There weren so many treés yet
That I should all encumber'd be
Ere I had reckon'd every tree.
These trees were set, that I devise,[1] 500
One from an other in assise[2]
Five fathom or six, I trowé so;
But they were high and great also,
And for to keep out well the sun
The croppés were so thick yrun, 505
And every branch in other knit,
And full of greené leavés set,
That sunné might there none descend
Lest that the tender grasses shend.[3]
There might men does and roes isee, 510
And of squirrels full great plenty
From bough to bough alway leaping;
Conies there were also playing,
That comen out of their clapers,[4]
Of sundry colours and manners, 515
And maden many' a tourneying
Upon the freshé grass springing.
In places saw I wellés there
In whiché there no froggés were,
And fair in shadow was each well; 520
But I ne can the number tell
Of streamés small that by devise[5]
Mirth had done come through condise,[6]
Of which the water in running
'Gan maken a noise full liking.[7] 525
About the brinkés of these wellés,
And by the streamés over' all ellés,
Sprang up the grass, as thick iset
And soft eke as any velvet,
On which man might his lemman lay, 530
As on a featherbed to play,
For the earth was full soft and sweet;
Thorough moisture of the well wet
Sprang up the soté[8] greené grass
As fair, as thick, as mister was;[9] 535

[1] Devise — describe. [2] Assise — situation. [3] Shend — spoil. [4] Clapers—burrows. [5] Devise—contrivance. [6] Condise—conduits. [7] Liking—pleasing. [8] Sote—sweet. [9] Mister was—need be.

But much amended it the place
That the earth was of such a grace
That it of flow'res hath plenty
That both in summer' and winter be.
There sprang the violet all new, 540
And fresh pervinké rich of hue,
And flow'rés yellow, white, and red;
Such plenty grew there ne'er in mead :
Full gay was all the ground and quaint,[1]
And powder'd as men had it paint, 545
With many' a fresh and sundry flow'r,
That casten up full good savóur.

THE GOD OF LOVE'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE POET FOR HIS RULE OF CONDUCT UPON ENTERING INTO HIS SERVICE.

"Villainy[2] at the beginning
I will, said Love, over all thing
Thou leave, if that thou wilt ybe 550
False, and trespass againést me :
I curse and blame generally
All them that loven villainy,
For villainy maketh villáin,
And by his deeds a churl is seen. 555
"These villains are without pity,
Friendship and love, and all bounty :
I n'ill[3] receive to my servíce
Them that be villains of emprise.[4]
"But understand in thine intent 560
That this is not mine intendément[5]
To clepen[6] no wight in no age
Only gentle for his lineáge;
But who so that is virtuous,
And in his port not outragéous :[7] 565
When such one thou see'st thee beforn,
Though he be not gentle born,
Thou mayest well see this in soth[8]
That he' is gentle, because he doth
As 'longeth to a gentleman ; 570
Of them none other deem I can ;[9]

[1] Quaint—trim, neat. [2] Villainy—ill-breeding. [3] N'ill—will not. [4] Villains of emprise—villains in undertaking. [5] Intendement—understanding. [6] Clepen — call. [7] Outrageous — obstreperous, violent. [8] In soth—in truth. [9] Deem I can—I can judge them in no other way.

For certainly withouten drede[1]
A churl[2] is deeméd by his deed,
Of high or low, as ye may see,
Or of what kindred that he be; 575
Ne say naught for none evil will,
Thing which that is to holden still:[3]
It is no worship to missay;[4]
Thou may'st example take of Kay,
That was sometime for missaying 580
Yhated both of old and young:
As far as Gawen the worthy
Was praised for his courtesy
Kay was hated, for he was fell,[5]
Of words despiteous[6] and cruel; 585
Wherefore be wise and acquaintable,[7]
Goodly of word, and reasonable,
Bothé to less and eke to mare:[8]
And when thou comest there[9] men are,
Look that thou have in custom aye 590
First to salue[10] them if thou may;
And if it fall that of them some
Salue thee first, be thou not dumb,
But 'quite[11] them courteously anon,
Without abiding, ere they gone. 595
"For nothing eke thy tongue apply
To speaken words of ribaldry:
To villain speech[12] in no degree
Let not thy lip unbounden be;
For I naught hold him in good faith 600
Courteous that foulé wordés saith.
And allé women serve and praise,
And to thy power their honour raise;
And if that any missayer[13]
Despise womén that thou may'st hear, 605
Blame him, and bid him hold him still;
And set thy might and all thy will
Women and ladies for to please,
And to do thing that may them ease,

[1] Drede—doubt. [2] A churl is deemed—an ill-bred man is judged by his acts. [3] To holden still—that which is to be kept secret. [4] It is no worship, &c.—it is dishonourable to speak evil. [5] Fell—wicked, cruel. [6] Despiteous—spiteful. [7] Acquaintable—sociable, easy to form acquaintance. [8] Mare—more. [9] There—where. [10] Salue—salute. [11] Quite—requite. [12] Villain speech—low, vulgar talking. [13] Missayer—slanderer.

V. 579. *Kay.*] Sir Kay, the Seneschall; one of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table.

That they evér speak good of thee, 610
For so thou may'st best praiséd be.
"Look that from pride thou keep thee well,
For thou may'st both perceive and feel
That pride is both follý and sin;
And he that pride hath him within 615
Ne may his hearté in no wise
Meeken,[1] ne supplien[2] to servíce,
For pride is found in every part
Contráry unto Lovés art;
And he that loveth truély 620
Should him containé[3] jollily
Withouten pride in sundry wise,
And him disguisen in quaintise;[4]
For quaint array, withouten drede,[5]
Is nothing proud, who taketh heed;[6] 625
For fresh array as men may see,
Withouten pride may often be.
"Maintain thyself after thy rent[7]
Of robe and eké of garment,
For many a sithe[8] fair clothing 630
A man amendeth in much thing.
"And look alway that they be shape[9]
(What garment that thou shalt thee make)
Of him that can the best ydo,
With all that pértaineth thereto, 635
Pointés and sleevés be well sittand[10]
Full right and straight upon the hand:
Of shoon and bootés new and fair
Look at the least thou have a pair,
And that they sit so fetously[11] 640
That these rude men may utterly
Marvél, sith that they sit so plain,
How they come on or off again:
Wear straighté glovés, with aumere[12]

[1] Meeken—become humble. [2] Supplien—become pliant. [3] Containe—behave, regulate his conduct. [4] Quaintise—neatness. [5] Drede—doubt. [6] Who taketh heed—(the whole passage would run thus): "For, he who observeth, may, without doubt, remark that a trim array in dress is unaccompanied with pride." [7] Rent—income. [8] Sithe—time. [9] Shape—shapen, fashioned. [10] Sittand—sitting. [11] Fetously—properly. [12] Aumere of silk—the glossary conjectures aumere to be "a corruption of *aumener*," which means a *purse;* but I confess I do not then perceive the application. Were gloves in former times so fashioned as to serve the double purpose of glove and purse too? An anecdote is related of Sir Matthew Hale, the judge, that a lady, desirous of interesting him in her cause, presented him with a pair of richly embroidered gloves filled with gold coins. He said he could not be so ungallant as to refuse a pair of gloves from a lady; but he poured out and returned the money: tradition also adds, that he gave the cause against her.

Of silk: and alway with good cheer 645
Thou give, if that thou have richess,
And if thou have naught spend the less:
Alway be merry if thou may,
But wasté not thy good alway:
Have hat of flow'rés fresh as May, 650
Chaplet of rosés of Whitsunday,
For such array costeth but lite:[1]
Thine handés wash, thy teeth make white,
And let no filth upon thee be:
Thy nailés black if thou may'st see, 655
Void it away deliverly;[2]
And comb thine head right jollily:[3]
Farce[4] not thy visage in no wise,
For that of Love is not th' emprise,[5]
For Love doth haten, as I find, 660
A beauty that cometh not of kind:[6]
Alway in heart I redé[7] thee
Full glad and merry for to be,
And be as joyful as thou can;
Love hath no joy of sorrówful man 665
That ill is full of courtesy,
That knoweth in his malady
For ever of love the sickéness
Is meint[8] with sweet and bitterness.
The sore of love is marvellous, 670
For now the lover is joyous,
Now can he play, now can he groan,
Now can he sing, now maken moan;
To-day he plain'th for heaviness,
To-morrow he plain'th for jolliness.[9] 675
The life of love is full contráry,
Which stoundémele[10] can often vary;
But if thou canest mirthés make
That men in gré[11] will gladly take
Do it goodly, I commandé thee; 680
For men should, where so e'er they be,
Do thing that them befitting is,
For thereof com'th good loos[12] and praise;
Whereof[13] that thou be virtuous,
Ne be not strange ne dangerous;[14] 685

[1] Lite—little. [2] Deliverly—quickly. [3] Jollily—prettily, tastefully. [4] Farce—paint. [5] Emprise—the accomplishment of love. [6] Of kind—the whole phrase is, "Love hateth beauty that is not so by nature." [7] Rede—advise. [8] Meint—mingled. [9] Jolliness—mirth. [10] Stoundemele—every instant. [11] In gre—in good will. [12] Loos—means also praise (*laus*). [13] Whereof that thou, &c.—whatever virtue you may possess. [14] Dangerous—backward.

For if that thou good rider be,
Prick gladly[1] that men may thee see;
In armés also if thou con,[2]
Pursue till thou a name hast won:
And if thy voice be fair and clear 690
Thou shalt make no great danger;[3]
When thee to sing they goodly pray
It is thy worship[4] for t' obey:
Also to you it 'longeth aye
To harp and gitern,[5] dance and play; 695
For if he can well foot and dance
It may him greatly do advance,
Among eke for thy lady's sake
Songés and complaintés that thou make,
For that will moven in her heart 700
When that they readen of thy smart:
Look that no man for scarce[6] thee hold,
For that may grieve thee manifold.[7]
Reason will that a lover be
In his gifts more large and free[8] 705
Than churls that be not of loving;
For who thereof can any thing,[9]
He shall be lefe aye[10] for to give.
In landés lore[11] who so would live?
For he that through a sudden sight, 710
Or for a kissing anon right,
Gave whole his heart in will and thought,
And to himself keep'th right naught,
After this swift gift 'tis but reasón
He give his good too in a bandon."[12] 715

PARADOXICAL DEFINITION OF LOVE.

Lové it is a hateful peace,
A free' acquittance without release,
A truth fret full[13] of falshead,
A sikerness all set in drede;[14]
In heart is a despairing hope, 720
And full of hope it is wanhope;[15]
A wise woodness,[16] and void reason,
A sweeté peril in to drown;

[1] Prick gladly—ride briskly. [2] Con—understand. [3] Make no danger—be not coy. [4] Thy worship—for thy honour. [5] Gitern—guitar, or lute. [6] For scarce thee hold—account thee a niggard. [7] Grieve thee manifold—injure thee in various ways. [8] Large and free—bountiful and frank. [9] Can any thing—knows any thing. [10] Lefe aye—always glad. [11] Lore—desolate. [12] In a bandon—at disposal. [13] Fret full—full fraught. [14] In drede—a certainty set in doubt. [15] Wanhope—despair. [16] Woodness—madness.

A heavy burthen light to bear,
A wicked wave away to wear; 725
It is Charybdis perilous,
Disagreeable and gracious;
'Tis díscordance that can accord,
And áccordance unto discord;
It is conning[1] without science, 730
And wisdom without sapience,
Wit withouten discretión,
Avoir without possessión;
It is sick hele[2] and whole sickness,
A trust drownéd and drunkenness, 735
And health all full of malady,
And charity full of envy,
And angre full of abundance,[3]
And a full greedy suffisance,
Delight right full of heaviness, 740
And dreariness full of gladness,
Bitter sweetness and sweet erróur,
Right evil savour'd good savóur,
A sin that pardon hath within,
And pardon spotted without sin, 745
A pain also it is joyous,
And felony right pitéous,[4]
Also a play[5] that seld' is stable,
And steadfastness right movable,
A strength weakéd to stand upright, 750
And a feebleness full of might,
Wit unadvised, sage folly,
And joyé full of tormentry,
A laughter it is weeping aye,
Rest that travaileth night and day, 755
Also a sweeté hell it is,
And a sorrowful paradise,
A pleasant gaol and easy prisón,
And full of frostés summer season,
Prime[6] temps full of frostés white, 760
And May devoid of all delight,
With sere[7] branches blossoms ungreen,
And new fruit filléd with winter teen;[8]

[1] Conning—knowledge. [2] Hele—health. [3] Angre full of abundance—unless the word *angre* formerly bore a signification very different from our present acceptation of the word *anger*, and in contradistinction to the word *abundance*, I confess myself wholly unable to reconcile the meaning of the above phrase, or to maintain unbroken the string of antithetical paradoxes. [4] Piteous—merciful, compassionate. [5] Play—a moving body. [6] Prime temps—spring. [7] Sere—dry, withered. [8] Teen—afflicting.

It is a slowe[1] may not forbear;
Rags ribanéd with gold to wear, 765
For all so well will Love be set
Under rags as rich rotchet,[2]
And eke as well by amorets[3]
In mourning black as bright burnets[4]
For none is of so muchel prize, 770
Ne no man founden is so wise,
Ne no man so high of parége,[5]
Ne no man found of wit so sage,
No man so hardy ne so wight,[6]
Ne no man of so muchel might, 775
None so fulfilléd of bountý,
That he with love may daunted[7] be;
All the worldé hold'th this way,
Love maketh all to go misway
But[8] it be they of evil life, 780
Whom Genius curséd, man and wife,
That wrongly work against Natúre;
None such I love, ne have no cure[9]
Of such as Lovés servants been,
And will not by my counsel fleen;[10] 785
For I ne praisen that loving
Where through man at the last ending
Shall call them wretches full of woe,
Love grieveth them and shendeth[11] so;
But if thou wilt well Love eschew 790
For to escape out of his mew,[12]
And make all whole the sorrow slack,
No better counsel may'st thou take
Than think to fleén well i-wis;
May naught help else, for wit thou this, 795
If thou fly it, it shall fly thee,
Follow' it and followen shall it thee.

[1] It is a slowe, &c.—"it is a moth that cannot abstain," alluding probably to the proneness of that insect to run into destruction where there is a burning light. [2] Rotchet—loose upper garment. [3] Amorets—love-knots. [4] Burnets—cloth dyed brown. [5] Parage—kindred. [6] Wight—active. [7] Daunted—conquered. [8] But—unless. [9] Cure—care. [10] Fleen—flee, go. [11] Shendeth—punisheth. [12] Mew—place of confinement. Originally a cage, in which falcons were enclosed while mewing, or moulting.

FRIENDLY LOVE.

Love of friendship also there is
Which maketh no man do amiss;
Of will yknit betwixten two, 800
That will not break for wele ne woe;
Which long is likely to contune,[1]
When will and good been in commune,
Grounded by Goddés ordinance,
All whole withouten discordance, 805
With them yholding commancé,[2]
Of all their good in charity;[3]
That there be none exceptión
Through changing of intentión;
That each help other at their need, 810
And wisely hele[4] both word and deed;
True of meaning, devoid of sloth,
For wit[5] is naught withouten truth;
So that the one dare all his thought
Say to his friend, and sparen naught, 815
As to himself, without dreading
To be discovered by wraying,[6]
For glad is that conjunctión
When there is no suspectión
Betwixen them whom they would prove, 820
That true and perfect were in love;
For no man may be amiable
But if he be[7] so firm and stable
That Fortune change him not, nor blind,
But that his friend alway him find, 825
Both poor and rich, in one estate;
For if his friend through any gate[8]
Will complain of his poverty,
He should not bide so long till he
Of his helping doth him require; 830
For good deed done thorough prayér[9]
Is sold and bought too dear i-wis[10]
To heart that of great value is;
For heart fulfilléd of gentleness
Can evil demean[11] his distress; 835
And man, that worthy is of name,
To asken often hath great shame.

[1] Contune—continue. [2] Commance—community at table, companionship. [3] Charity—brotherly love. [4] Hele—conceal. [5] Wit—sense, understanding. [6] Wraying—betraying. [7] But if he be—unless he be. [8] Any gate—any mode, or means. [9] Prayer—entreaty. [10] I-wis—certainly. [11] Demean—complain of.

A good man burneth in his thought
For shame when that he asketh aught:
He hath great thought and dreadeth aye 840
For his disease[1] when he shall pray
His friend lest that he warnéd[2] be
Till he prove his stability:
But when that he hath founden one
That trusty is and true as stone, 845
And hath assayéd him at all,
And found him steadfast as a wall,
And of his friendship be certain,
He shall him show both joy and pain,
And all that he dare think or say, 850
Withouten shame, as he well may;
For how should he ashaméd be
Of such a one as I told thee?
For when he wot his secret thought,
The third shall know thereof right naught; 855
For tway in number is bet[3] than three
In every counsel and secré:
Reproof he dreadeth never a deal[4]
Who that beset[5] his wordés well,
For every wise man out of drede[6] 860
Can keep his tongue till he see need.
And foolés cannot hold their tongue;
A foolés bell is soon yrung;
Yet shall a true friend doen more
To help his fellow of his sore, 865
And succour him when he had need
In all that he may do in deed,
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his fellow that he easeth:
And if he do not his request, 870
He shall as muchel him molest[7]
As his fellow, because that he
May not fulfil his volonté[8]
All fully as he hath required.
If both the heartés Love hath fired 875
Both joy and woe they shall depart,[9]
And take evenly each his part;
Half his annoy he shall have aye,
And comfort him what that he may,
And of his blissé part shall he, 880
If love willen departed[9] be.

[1] Disease — vexation. [2] Warned — refused. [3] Bet — better. [4] Never a deal—not at all. [5] Who that beset—whoso guardeth. [6] Drede—doubt. [7] Him molest—he will as much distress himself. [8] Volonte—will, desire. [9] Depart—divide.

THE FOLLOWING ARE ISOLATED PASSAGES OF POETICAL BEAUTY SELECTED FROM

"THE ASSEMBLY OF FOWLS."

UNIVERSAL REGENERATION.

FOR out of the oldé fieldés, as men saith,
Cometh all this new corn from year to year,
And out of oldé bookés, in good faith,
Cometh all this new science that men lere.[1] 4

[The following Sylvan Catalogue, with the concluding portion of the extract, have been copied, and almost verbally, by Spenser in his *Faery Queen*.]

Over all where I mine eyén cast
Were treés clad with leaves that aye shall last,
Each in his kind, with colour fresh and green
As emerald, that joy it was to seen. 8

The builder oak, and eke the hardy ash,
The pillar elm, the coffer unto caraine,[2]
The box pipe tree, the holme to whippés lash,
The sailing fir, the cypress death to 'plain,
The shooter yew, the aspe[3] for shaftés plain,
Th' olíve of peace, and eke the drunken vine,
The victor palm, the laurer to devine.[4] 15

A garden saw I full of blossom'd boughés
Upon a river in a greené mead,
There as sweetness evermore enow is,
With flow'rés white and blue, yellów and red,
And cold and clear well streamés, nothing dead,
That swammen full of smallé fishes light,
With finnés red and scalés silver bright. 22

On every bough the birdés heard I sing
With voice of angel in their harmony,
That busied them their birdés forth to bring :—

[1] Lere—learn. [2] Coffer unto caraine—chest to hold the corpse. [3] Aspe—aspen. [4] Devine, Fr. *deviner*—foretell, prophesy.

The little pretty conies to their play 'gan hie,
And farther all about I 'gan espy
The dreadful[1] roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirrels, and beastés small of gentle kind. 29

Of instruments of stringés in accord
Heard I so play a ravishing sweetness,
That God, that maker is of all and lord,
Ne heard nevér a better, as I guess :
Therewith a wind, unneth[2] it might be less,
Made in the leavés green a noisé soft
Accordant to the Fowlés song on loft. 36

The air of the place so attempre[3] was
That ne'er was there grievánce of hot ne cold,
There was eke every wholesome spice and grass,
Ne no man may there waxen sick ne old ;
Yet was there moré joy a thousand fold
Than I can tell, or ever could or might ;
There is ever clear day and never night. 43

[How admirably concise and comprehensive is the following characteristic Catalogue of the Fowls.]

There mighten men the royal eagle find,
That with his sharpé look pierceth the sun,
And other eagles of a lower kind,
Of which that clerkés well devisén con ;[4]
There was the tyrant with his feathers dun
And green, I mean the goshawk that doth pine[5]
To birds for his outragéous ravine ; 50

The gentle falcon, that with his feet distraineth
The kingés hand ; the hardy sperhawk eke,
The quailés foe ; the merlion, that paineth
Himself full oft the larké for to seek ;
There was the dové, with her eyen so meek ;
The jealous swan, against his death that singeth ;
The owl eke, that of death the bode ybringeth ; 57

The crane, (the geant) with his trumpés soun ;
The thief the chough, and eke the chatt'ring pie ;
The scorning jay ; the eelés foe th' heróun ;
The false lapwing, all full of treachery ;
The starling, that the counsel can bewray ;
The tamé ruddock,[6] and the coward kite ;
The cock, that horologe is of thorpés lite ;[7] 64

[1] Dreadful—fearful, timid. [2] Unneth—scarcely. [3] Attempre—temperate. [4] Devisen con—can well describe. [5] Pine—pain, torment. [6] Ruddock—red-breast. [7] Horologe of thorpes lite—the clock to little villages.

The sparrow, Venus' son ; the nightingale,
That clepeth[1] forth the freshé leavés new ;
The swallow, murd'rer of the beés smale
That maken honey of flow'res fresh of hue ;
The wedded turtle with her hearté true ;
The peacock with his angel feathers bright ;
The pheasant, scorner of the cock by night ; 71

The waker goose ;[2] the cuckow, e'er unkind ;[3]
The popinjay,[4] full of delicacy ;
The drake, destroyer of his owné kind ;
The stork, the wreaker of advoutery ;[5]
The hoté cormorant, full of gluttony ;
The raven wise ; the crow, with voice of care ;
The throstle old, and frosty fieldéfare. 78

[1] Clepeth—calleth. [2] Waker goose—an historical allusion to this bird having saved the Roman capitol. The goose is, by nature, so watchful, that it is next to impossible to surprise it when asleep. [3] Unkind—unnatural. [4] Popinjay—qu.? the parrot. [5] Wreaker of advoutery—revenger of adultery.

BALLADS, &c.

SOMETIME the world so steadfast was and stable,
That man's word was an obligatión,
And now it is so false and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusión,
Is nothing like ; for turned is up so down
All the world, through mede[1] and fickleness,
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness. 7

What maketh the world to be so variable
But lust[2] that men have in dissensión ?
For among us a man is held unable,
But if he can by some collusión
Do his neighbóur wrong and oppressión;
What causeth this but wilful wretchedness?[3]
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness. 14

Truth is put down, reason is held fable,
Virtúe hath now no dominatión,
Pity' is exiléd, no man is merciáble,
Through covetise is blent discretión ;
The world hath made a permutatión
From right to wrong, from truth to fickleness,
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness. 21

L'ENVOYE.

Prince, aye desire to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk, and hate extortión ;
Suffer nothing that may be reprovable
To thine estate doen in thy región ;
Show forth the yard[4] of castigatión ;
Dread God, do law, love truth and worthiness,
And wed thy folk ayen to steadfastness. 28

[1] Mede — favour. [2] Lust — desire. [3] Wretchedness — wrath, revenge. [4] Yard—rod, staff.

BALLAD.

Go forth, king, and rule thee by sapience;
Bishop, be able to minister doctríne;
Lord, to true counsel give thou audience;
Womanhood, to chastity e'er incline;
Knight, let thy deedés worship determine;
Be righteous, judge, in saving of thy name;
Rich, do almous, lest thou lose bliss with shame; 7

People, obey your king and eke the law;
Age, be ruléd by good religión;
True servant, be dreadful,[1] keep thee' under awe;
And thou, pover,[2] fie on presumptión;
Inobedience to youth is utter destructión:
Remember you how God hath set you, lo!
And do your part as ye be' ordainéd to. 14

CHAUCER TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you my purse, and to none other wight,
Complain I, for ye be my lady dear;
I am sorry now that ye be so light,
For certés ye now make me heavy cheer:
Me were as lief be laid upon a bier,
For which unto your mercy thus I cry,
Be heavy again, or ellés must I die. 7

Now vouchsafen this day ere it be night
That I of you the blissful sound may hear,
Or see your colour like the sunné bright,
That of yellowness ne had never peer;
Ye be my life, ye be my heartés steer;[3]
Queen of comfórt and of good company,
Be heavy again, or ellés must I die. 14

Now purse, that art to me my livés light,
And saviour, as down in this world here,
Out of this towné help me by your might,
Sithen that you will not be my tresór,
For I am shave as nigh as any frere,
But I prayen unto your courtesy
Be heavy again, or ellés must I die. 21

[1] Dreadful—timid. [2] Pover—poor. [3] Steer—guide, helm.

CHAUCER UNTO THE KING (HENRY IV.)

O CONQUEROR of Brutés Albion!
Which that by line and free electión
Been very king, this unto you I send,
And ye which that may all harms amend,
Have mind upon my supplicatión. 5

A BALLAD MADE BY CHAUCER,

TEACHING WHAT IS GENTLENESS, OR WHO IS WORTHY TO BE CALLED GENTLE.

THE firsté stock, father of gentleness,
What man desireth gentle for to be,
Must follow' his trace, and all his wittés dress [1]
Virtue to love and vices for to flee,
For unto virtue 'longeth dignity,
And not the réverse, safely dare I deem,[2]
Al'[3] wear he mitre, crown, or diadem. 7

This firsté stock was full of righteousness,
True of his word, sober, piteous, and free.[4]
Clean of his ghost,[5] and lovéd business,
Against the vice of sloth in honesty,
And, but [6] his heir love virtue as did he,
He is not gentle though he riché seem,
Al' wear he mitre, crown, or diadem. 14

Vicé may well be heir to old Richéss,
But there may no man, as men may well see,
Bequeath his heir his virtuous nobless,
That is appropriéd unto no degree,
But to the first father in majesty,
That maketh his heir him that can him queme,[7]
Al' wear he mitre, crown, or diadem. 21

[1] Wittes dress—arrange, or prepare, his faculties. [2] Deem—pronounce, assert. [3] Al'—although. [4] Free—bountiful. [5] Clean of his ghost—pure in spirit. [6] But—unless. [7] Queme—please.

HERE FOLLOWETH A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE IN THE PRAISE, OR RATHER DISPRAISE, OF WOMEN FOR THEIR DOUBLENESS.

THIS world is full of variance
In every thing, who taketh heed,
That faith and trust, and all constance,
Exiléd be, this is no drede,[1]
And save only in womanhead,
I can ysee no sikerness;[2]
But for all that yet, as I read,
Beware alway of doubleness. 8

Also that the fresh summer flowers,
The white and red, the blue and green,
Be suddenly with winter showers,
Made faint and fade, withouten ween,[3]
That trust is none, as ye may seen,
In no thing, nor no steadfastness,
Except in women, thus I mean;
Yet aye beware of doubleness. 16

The crooked moon (this is no tale),
Some while isheen[4] and bright of hue,
And after that full dark and pale,
And every moneth changeth new
That who the very sothé[5] knew
All thing is built on brittleness,
Save that women alway be true,
Yet aye beware of doubleness. 24

The lusty[6] freshé summer's day,
And Phœbus with his beamés clear,
Towardés night they draw away,
And no longer list t' appear,
That in this present life now here
Nothing abideth in his fairness,
Save women aye be found entere,[7]
And devoid of all doubleness. 32

The sea eke with his sterné wawés[8]
Each day yfloweth new again,
And by the concourse of his lawés
The ebbe floweth in certáin;

[1] Drede — doubt. [2] Sikerness — surety, steadfastness. [3] Withouten ween — doubtless. [4] Isheen — shining. [5] Sothe — truth. [6] Lusty — pleasant. [7] Entere — entire, whole, sound. [8] Wawes — waves.

After great drought there cometh rain ;
That farewell here all stableness,
Save that women be whole and plein ;[1]
Yet aye beware of doubleness. 40

Fortunés wheel go'th round about
A thousand timés day and night,
Whose course standeth ever in doubt
For to transmue[2] she is so light,
For which adverteth in your sight
Th' untrust of worldly fickleness,
Save women, which of kindly right[3]
Ne hath no touch of doubleness. 48

What man ymay the wind restrain,
Or holden a snake by the tail ?
Who may a slipper eel constrain
That it will void withouten fail ?
Or who can driven so a nail
To maké sure newfangleness,[4]
Save women, that can gie[5] their sail
To row their boat with doubleness ? 56

At every haven they can arrive
Whereas they wot is good passáge ;
Of innocence they cannot strive
With wawés,[6] nor no rockés rage ;
So happy is their lodemanage[7]
With needle' and stone their course to dress,[8]
That Solomon was not so sage
To find in them no doubleness : 64

Therefore whoso doth them accuse
Of any double intentión,
To speaké rown, other to muse,[9]
To pinch at[10] their conditión,
All is but false collusión,
I dare right well the soth express,
They have no better protectión,
But shroud them under doubleness. 72

So well fortunéd is their chance,
The dice to-turnen up so down,
With sice and cinque they can advance,
And then by revolutión

[1] Plein—complete. [2] Transmue—change. [3] Kindly right—really by nature. [4] Newfangleness—novelty, inconstancy. [5] Gie—guide. [6] Wawes—waves. [7] Lodemanage—steering, pilotage. [8] Dress—manage. [9] Speake rown, other to muse—either in whispering or gazing. [10] To pinch at—to find a flaw in.

They set a fell conclusión
Of lombés,[1] as in sothfastness,
Though clerkés maken mentión
Their kind is fret with doubleness. 80

Sampson yhad experience
That women were full true yfound
When Dalila of innocence
With shearés 'gan his hair to round;[2]
To speak also of Rosamond,
And Cleopatra's faithfulness,
The stories plainly will confound
Men that apeach[3] their doubleness. 88

Single thing is not ypraiséd,
Nor of old is of no renown,
In balance when they be ypesed,[4]
For lack of weight they be borne down,
And for this cause of just reason
These women all of rightwisness[5]
Of choice and free election
Most love exchange and doubleness. 96

L'ENVOYE.

O ye women! which be inclinéd
By influence of your natúre
To be as pure as gold yfinéd,
And in your truth for to endure,
Armeth yourself in strong armúre,
(Lest men assail your sikerness,)[6]
Set on your breast, yourself t' assure,
A mighty shield of doubleness. 104

[1] Lombes.—The following is the only interpretation of this passage that I have been able to meet with, and it is from *Urry;* no other edition of Chaucer, that I am acquainted with, containing any reference to the word *lombes*:—"Though clerks, or scholars, represent women to be like lambs for their truth and sincerity, yet they are all fraught, or filled, with doubleness, or falsehood." [2] To round—to round off, to cut round. [3] Apeach—impeach. [4] Ypesed, Fr. *pesé*—weighed. [5] Rightwisness—justice. [6] Sikerness—security.

*BALLAD.**

ALONE walking,
In thought plaining,
And sore sighing,
All desolate, 4

Me remembring
Of my living,
My death wishing
Both early and late, 8

Infortunate
Is so my fate,
That wot ye what?
Out of measúre 12

My life I hate.
Thus desperate
In such poor estate
Do I endure. 16

Of other cure[1]
Am I not sure.
Thus to endure
Is hard certáin. 20

Such is my ure[2]
I you ensure:
What creáture
May have more pain? 24

My truth so plain
Is take in vain,
And great disdain
In remembrance; 28

Yet I full fain
Would me complain
Me to abstain
From this penance: 32

But in substance
None allegiance
Of my grievance
Can I not find: 36

Right so my chance
With displeasance
Doth me advance;
And thus an end. 40

[1] Cure—care. [2] Ure—use, custom.

* Supposed by Mr. Tyrrwhit to be a specimen of the Virelay.

A BALLAD.

In Feverere, when that it was full cold,
Frost, snow, hail, rain, hath dominatión,
With changeable' elements and winds manifold,
Which hath of ground, flower, herb, jurisdictión
For to dispose after their correctión,
And yet Aprilis with his pleasant showers
Dissolveth the snow and bringeth forth his flowers; 7

Of whose invention[1] lovers may be glad,
For they bring in the kalendés of May,
And they with countenance demure, meek, and sad,[2]
Owe to worship the lusty flowers alway,
And in special one call'd see of the day,
The däisy, a flower white and red,
And in French called *La belle Margarete.* 14

O commendable flower, and most in mind!
O flower and graciós of excellence!
O amiable Margarite! of native kind,[3]
To whom I must resort with diligence,
With heart, will, thought, most lowly obedience,
I to be your servant, ye my regent,
For life nor death never for to repent. 21

Of this procéss now forth will I proceed,
Which happeth unto me with great disdain,
As for the time thereof I take least heed,
For unto me was brought the soré pain,
Therefore my cause was the more to complain,
Yet unto me my grievance was the less
That I was so nigh my lady' and mistress. 28

There where she was present in this samé place,
I having in hearté great adversity,
Except only the fortune and goodé grace
Of her whose I am, the which relievéd me,
And my great duress[4] unlac'd hath she,
And brought me out of the fearful grievance,
If 'twere her ease it were to me pleasánce. 35

As for the woe which that I did endure
It was to me a very pleasant pain,
Seeing it was for that fair creáture
Which is my lady and my sovéreign,
In whose presénce I would be passing fain,[5]

[1] Invention—coming in. [2] Sad—steadfast. [3] Of native kind—so born by nature. [4] Duress—hardship. [5] Fain—glad.

So that I wist[1] it weren her pleasúre,
For she' is from all distance my protector. 42

Though unto me dreadful ywere the chance,
No manner of gentleness oweth me[2] to blame,
For I had lever[3] suffer' of death the penánce
Than she should for me' have dishonóur or shame,
Or in any wise losen her good name;
So wisly[4] God for his endless mercý
Grant every lover joy of his lady! 49

A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE AGAINST WOMEN UNCONSTANT.

MADAME, ye have for your newfangleness[5]
Many a servant put out of your grace;
I take my leave of your unsteadfastness,
For well I wot while ye to live have space
Ye cannot love full half year in a place;
To new thingés your lust is ever keen;
Instead of blue thus may ye wear all green.[6] 7

Right as a mirror that nothing may' impress,
But lightly as it com'th so must it pass,
So far'th your love, your workés bear witnéss;
There is no faithé may your heart embrace,
But as a weathercock, that turn'th his face
With every wind, ye fare, and that is seen;
Instead of blue thus may ye wear all green. 14

Ye might be shrinéd for your brittleness
Better than Dalila, Creseida, or Candáce,
For ever in changing stand'th your sikerness,[7]
That tache[8] may no wight from your heart arace;
If ye lose one ye can well twain purcháse,
All light for summer, ye' wot well what I mean;
Instead of blue thus may ye wear all green. 21

[1] Wist—knew. [2] Oweth me—ought I. [3] Lever—more gladly, rather. [4] Wisly—surely. [5] Newfangleness—love of novelty. [6] Blue and green—blue is the emblem of constancy, and green of desertion. [7] Sikerness—your constancy stands, or consists, in ever changing. [8] That tache may no wight, &c.—that blot can no one pluck from your heart.

A BALLAD.

Of their natúre they greatly them delight,
With holy face yfelgnéd for the nones,[1]
In sanct'ary their friendés to visíte,
More for reliqués than for saintés bones,
Though they be closéd under precious stones,
To get them pardon, like their old uságes,
To kiss no shrines but lusty quick[2] imáges. 7

When maidens are wedded and household have take
All their humility' is exil'd away,
And the' cruel hearts beginneth to awake,
They do' all the busy cure[3] they can or may
To vex their household-masters, soth to say,
Wherefore, ye young men, I redé[4] you forthy
Beware alway; the blind eat'th many fly. 14

Of this matter I dare make no relatión,
In default of sleep my spirités wax faint,
In my study I' have had long habitatión,
My body' and ghost[5] are grievously attaint,
And therefore I make no longer complaint;
But whether that the blind eat flesh or fish
I pray God keep the fly out of my dish! 21

Now' I make end, and lay me down to rest,
For I know by experience verament[6]
If maidenés and wivés knew and wist
Who made the matter, he should soon be shent,[7]
Wherefore I pray that God omnipotent
Him save and keepen bothé night and day.—
Written in the lusty seasón of May. 28

CHAUCER'S WORDS UNTO HIS OWN SCRIVENER.*

Adam Scrivener, if ever it thee befall
Boece or Troilus for to writé new,
Under thy long lockés may'st thou have the scall,

[1] For the nones—for the occasion. [2] Quick—live. [3] Cure—care. [4] Rede you forthy—I in consequence advise you. [5] Ghost—spirit. [6] Verament—truly. [7] Shent—ruined.

* This denunciation on the part of our poet, is a testimony of the incorrectness of the scriveners and copyists, and at once accounts for the innumerable variations that occur in all the MSS. This was my only reason for dignifying it with a place among the "Riches" of his brain.

But[1] after my making thou write more true,
So oft a-day I must thy work renew
It to correct, and eke to rub and scrape,
And all is through thy negligence and rape.[2] 7

GOOD COUNSEL OF CHAUCER.

HIS LAST COMPOSITION, AND WRITTEN UPON HIS DEATH-BED, "WHEN HE WAS IN GREAT ANGUISH."

FLY from the press[3] and dwell with sothfastness;[4]
Suffice unto thy good[5] though it be small;
For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,
Press[6] hath envy, and weal is blent[7] o'er all;
Savour[8] no more than thee behoven shall;
Rede[9] well thyself, that otherfolk can'st rede,
And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede.[10] 7

Pain thee not each crooked to redress
In trust of her that turneth as a ball;
Great rest standeth in little business;
Beware also to spurn against a nalle;[11]
Strive not as doth a crocké[12] with a wall;
Deemeth[13] thyself that deemest other's deed,
And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede. 14

That[14] thee is sent receive in buxomness;[15]
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wilderness;
Forth pilgrim, forth O beast out of thy stall;
Look up on high, and thank thy God of all;
Waiveth thy lust and let thy ghost[16] thee lead,
And truth thee shall deliver 't is no drede. 21

[1] But—unless, [2] Rape—haste. [3] Press—crowd. [4] Sothfastness—truth. [5] Suffice unto thy good—be satisfied with thy wealth. [6] Press—striving. [7] Weal is blent—prosperity has ceased. [8] Savour—taste. [9] Rede—counsel. [10] No drede—without doubt. [11] Nalle—nail. [12] Crocke—earthen pitcher. [13] Deemeth—judge. [14] That—that (which). [15] Buxomness—civility, obedience. [16] Ghost—spirit.

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